GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE,

OR

THE COURT OF HENRY III.

KEEPING FESTIVAL IN ARDENNE,

A Romance.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY,

A METRICAL TALE;

WITH SOME POETICAL PIECES.

BY ANNE RADCLIFFE,

AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO," "ROMANCE OF THE FOREST," &c.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HER JOURNALS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1826.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET-STREET.

CONTENTS

OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

MRS. RADCLIFFE.



LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

MRS. RADCLIFFE.

The Life of Mrs. Radcliffe is a pleasing phenomenon in the literature of her time. During a period, in which the spirit of personality has extended its influence, till it has rendered the habits and conversation of authors almost as public as their compositions, she confined herself, with delicate apprehensiveness, to the circle of domestic duties and pleasures. Known only by her works, her name was felt as a spell by her readers. Among the thousands, whose life-blood curdled beneath her terrors, many little suspected, that the potent enchantress was still an inhabitant of this "bright and breathing world." Even her romances, forming a class apart from all, which had gone before, and unapproached by imitators, wore a certain air of antiquity, and seemed scarcely to belong to the

present age. Having long ceased to publish, she acquired in her retreat the honours of posthumous fame. Her unbroken retirement suggested to those, who learned that she still lived, a fancy that something unhappy was connected with her story, and gave occasion to the most absurd and groundless rumours, respecting her condition. But, while some spoke of her as dead, and others represented her as afflicted with mental alienation, she was thankfully enjoying the choicest blessings of life—with a cheerfulness as equable as if she had never touched the secret springs of horror, and with a humility as genuine as though she had not extended the domain of romance, for the delight and the benefit of her species.

In drawing aside the veil from the personal course of this celebrated lady, her biographer cannot exhibit any of the amusing varieties, which usually chequer the lives of successful authors: here are no brilliant conversational triumphs; no elaborate correspondence with the celebrated, or the great; no elegant malice; no anecdotes of patrons or rivals; none of fashion's idle pastime, nor of controversy's more idle business. Even the great events of Mrs. Radcliffe's life, the successive appearances of her novels, extend over a small part only of its duration. A stranger, witnessing its calm tenor of happiness, would little guess to what high and solemn inventions some of its hours had been devoted; yet the more attentive observer

would perceive, in her ordinary reflections and pleasures, indications of the power so marvellously exerted in her works. Fortunately, the means of watching the developement of her faculties and tastes in her daily pursuits are supplied by copious memorandums written on several of her journeys; in which, among rich and vivid descriptions, many characteristic traits of sentiment and feeling are scattered, and her moral excellencies shine forth in a lustre which warms, while it enlightens.

Mrs. Radcliffe was born in London, in July 1764. She was the only child of William and Ann Ward, persons of great respectability, who, though engaged in trade, were allied to families of independent fortune and high character. She was descended from the family of the De Witts of Holland. It appears, from some of the documents in the hands of her friends, that a member of this distinguished house came to England in the reign of Charles the First, under the patronage of Government, to execute a plan for draining the fens of Lincolnshire. The project was interrupted by the political troubles which ensued; but its author remained in England, and passed the remainder of his days in a mansion near Hull. He brought with him an infant daughter, named Amelia, who was the mother of one of Mrs. Radcliffe's male ancestors. Her paternal grandmother was the sister of Cheselden, the celebrated Surgeon, of whose kindness her father retained a lively recol-

lection. Her maternal grandmother was Ann Oates, the sister of Doctor Samuel Jebb, of Stratford, who was the father of Sir Richard Jebb; and she was related, on her mother's side, to Dr. Halifax, Bishop of Gloucester, and to Dr. Halifax, Physician to the King. She was instructed in all womanly accomplishments after the earlier fashion of the time, but was not exercised in the classics, nor excited to pursue the studies necessary to form the modern heroine of conversations. In childhood, her intelligence and docility won the marked affection of her relatives, who moved in a somewhat higher sphere than her parents, and she passed much of her time at their houses. Her maternal uncle-in-law, the late Mr. Bentley, of the firm of Wedgewood and Bentley, was exceedingly partial to his niece, and invited her often to visit him at Chelsea, and afterwards at Turnham Green, where he resided. At his house she enjoyed the benefit of seeing some persons of literary eminence, and many of accomplished manners. Mrs. Piozzi, Mrs. Montague, Mrs. Ord, and the gentleman called "Athenian Stuart," were among the visitors.

Although the quickness and accuracy of Mrs. Radcliffe's powers of observation were early felt by her friends, it does not seem, that the peculiar bent of her genius was perceived till after her marriage. She had been educated among members of the old school, in manners and morals, whose notions, while they prompted the most considerate

kindness towards their young charge, did not perhaps tend to excite precocious intellect, especially in a female of diffidence, approaching to shyness. Something of the formality derived from education may be traced in her works, supplying a massive but noble and definite frame-work for her sombre and heroic pictures. There was also, in the feeling of old gentility, which most of her relatives cherished, a natural repugnance to authorship, which she never entirely lost even after her splendid success was ensured, and she had found herself the creator of a new class in English romances.

In the twenty-third year of her age, Miss Ward was married to Mr. William Radcliffe, a graduate of Oxford, who, at one period, intended to follow the profession of the law, and, with that view, kept several terms at one of the Inns of Court, but who afterwards changed his purpose. The ceremony was performed at Bath, where her parents then resided, and she afterwards proceeded with her husband to live in the neighbourhood of London. Encouraged by him, she soon began to employ her leisure in writing; and, as her distrust of herself yielded to conscious success, proceeded with great rapidity. Mr. Radcliffe, about this time, became the proprietor of "The English Chronicle," and took an active share in the management of the paper, which, with other avocations, obliged him to be frequently absent from home till a late

hour in the evening. On these occasions, Mrs. Radcliffe usually beguiled the else weary hours by her pen, and often astonished her husband, on his return, not only by the quality, but the extent of the matter she had produced, since he left her. The evening was always her favourite season for composition, when her spirits were in their happiest tone, and she was most secure from interruption. So far was she from being subjected to her own terrors, that she often laughingly presented to Mr. Radcliffe chapters, which he could not read alone without shuddering.

Although Mrs. Radcliffe was as far as possible removed from the slavery of superstitious fear, she took an eager interest in the work of composition, and was, for the time, completely absorbed in the conduct of her stories. The pleasures of painting have been worthily celebrated by men, who have been devoted to the art; but these can scarcely be regarded as superior to the enjoyments of a writer of romance, conscious of inventive power. If in the mere perusal of novels we lose our painful sense of the realities of "this unimaginable world," and delightedly participate in the sorrows, the joys, and the struggles of the persons, how far more intensely must an authoress like Mrs. Radcliffe feel that outgoing of the heart, by which individuality is multiplied, and we seem to pass a hundred lives! She spreads out many threads of

sympathy and lives along every line. The passions, the affections, the hopes of her character are essentially her's; born out of her own heart; figured from the tracings of her own brain; and reflecting back again, in shape and form, the images and thoughts, which work indistinctly in the fancies of others. There is a perpetual exercise of that plastic power, which realizes the conceptions of the mind to itself, and gives back to it its own imaginations in "clear dream and solemn vision." How delightful to trace the dawnings of innocent love, like the coming on of spring; to unveil the daily course of a peaceful life, gliding on like smooth water; to exhibit the passions in their high agitations and contests; to devise generous self-sacrifice in heroic thought; to pour on the wearied and palpitating heart overflowing happiness; to throw the mind forward to advanced age, and through its glass to take a mournful retrospect of departed joy, and pensively understand a mild and timely decay! No exertion of the faculties appears more enviable than that of forming the outline of a great tale, like "The Mysteries of Udolpho;" bringing out into distinctness all the hints and dim pictures, which have long floated in the mind; keeping in view the catastrophe from the first, and the relations to it of the noblest scenes and most complicated adventures; and feeling already, as through all the pulses of the soul, the curiosity, the terror, the pity and the admiration,

which will be excited by the perusal in the minds of thousands and thousands of readers.

Incited by the intellectual recompense of such a pursuit, Mrs. Radcliffe gave her romances in quick succession to the world:—her first work, "The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne," was published in the year 1789; the "Sicilian Romance," in 1790; the "Romance of the Forest," in 1791; "The Mysteries of Udolpho," in 1794; and "The Italian," in 1797. It is pleasing to trace the developement of her resources and her gradual acquisition of mastery over them in these productions. The first, with a goodly number of old towers, dungeon keeps, subterraneous passages and hair-breadth escapes, has little of reality, or life; as if the author had caught a glimpse of the regions of romance from afar, and formed a sort of dreamy acquaintance with its recesses and glooms. In her next work, the "Sicilian Romance," she seems to obtain a bird's-eye view of all the surface of that delightful region—she places its winding vales and delicious bowers and summer seas before the eye of the mind—but is as yet unable to introduce the reader individually into the midst of the scene, to surround him with its luxurious air, and compel him to shudder at its terrors. In the "Romance of the Forest," she approaches and takes up her very residence in the pleasant borders of the enchanted land; the sphere she chooses is small and the persons limited; but

here she exercises clear dominion, and realizes every thing to the fancy. The "Mysteries of Udolpho" is the work of one, who has entered and possessed a mighty portion of that enchanted land; who is familiar with its massive towers and solemn glooms;—and who presents its objects of beauty, or horror, through a certain haze, which sometimes magnifies and sometimes veils their true proportions. In the "Italian," she occupies a less space; but, shining in golden light, her figures have the distinctness of terrible pictures; and her scenes, though perhaps less astounding in the aggregate, are singly more thrilling and vivid.

This splendid series of fictions became immediately popular with the numerous class of readers, who seek principally for amusement, and soon attracted the attention of the finer spirits of the age. Dr. Joseph Warton, the Head Master of Winchester School, who was far advanced in life when "The Mysteries of Udolpho" was published, told Mr. Robinson, the publisher, that, happening to meet with it, he was so fascinated, that he could not go to bed till he had finished it, and actually sat up the greater part of the night for the purpose. Mr. Sheridan spoke of the same work in terms of the highest eulogy. Mr. Fox, in a letter written to an intimate friend, soon after the publication of "The Italian," spoke of Mrs. Radcliffe's works in terms of high praise, and entered into a

somewhat particular examination and comparison of the respective merits of the "Mysteries of Udolpho" and "The Italian." The author of the Pursuits of Literature, not much given to commend, describes her as "The mighty magician of The Mysteries of Udolpho, bred and nourished by the Florentine muses, in their sacred, solitary caverns, amid the paler shrines of Gothic superstition, and in all the dreariness of enchantment: a poetess, whom Ariosto would, with rapture, have acknowledged as

—— La nudrita
Damigella Trivulzia al sacro speco."

The pecuniary advantages, which she derived from her works, though they have been exaggerated, were considerable, according to the fashion of the times. For the "Mysteries of Udolpho" she received from Messrs. Robinson £500.; a sum then so unusually large for a work of fiction, that Mr. Cadell, who had great experience in such matters, on hearing the statement, offered a wager of £10. that it was untrue. By the Italian, although considerably shorter, she acquired about the sum of £800.

The reputation, which Mrs. Radcliffe derived from her writings did not draw her from the retirement, in which they were written. Although, as she had no children, the duties of a family did not engross her attention, she declined entering

into the society she was so well calculated to adorn. Nothing but entire reciprocity in all the accompaniments of society could satisfy her ideas of the independence it became her to preserve. She would, indeed, have conferred honour and obligation on any circle, which she could prevail on herself to join; but a scrupulous self-respect, almost too nice to be appreciated in these days, induced her sedulously to avoid the appearance of reception, on account of her literary fame. The very thought of appearing in person as the author of her romances shocked the delicacy of her mind. To the publication of her works she was constrained by the force of her own genius; but nothing could tempt her to publish *herself*; or to sink for a moment, the gentlewoman in the novelist. She felt also a distaste to the increasing familiarity of modern manners, to which she had been unaccustomed in her youth; and, though remarkably free and cheerful with her relatives and intimate friends, she preferred the more formal politeness of the old school among strangers. Besides these reasons for preserving her seclusion, she enjoyed, with peculiar relish, the elegant pleasures it gave her the means of partaking with her husband. She chose at once the course she would pursue, and, finding that her views met the entire concurrence of Mr. Radcliffe, adhered to it through life. Instead of lavishing time and money on entertainments, the necessity for which, according to

her feelings, was connected with a participation in general society, she sought the comforts of residing in airy and pleasant situations, of unbroken leisure and frequent travelling; and, as her income was increased by the death of relatives, she retained the same plan of living, only extending its scale of innocent luxury.

In the summer of 1794, subsequent to the publication of "The Mysteries of Udolpho," Mrs. Radcliffe accompanied her husband on a tour through Holland and the western frontier of Germany, returning down the Rhine. This was the first and only occasion, on which she quitted England; though the vividness of her descriptions of Italy, Switzerland and the south of France, in which her scenes are principally laid, induced a general belief, that she had visited those countries. So strongly was this conviction impressed on the public mind, that a recent traveller of celebrity referred to her descriptions as derived from personal observation; and it was asserted in the "Edinburgh Review" for May 1823, that she accompanied her husband to Italy, when he was attached to one of the British Embassies, and that "it was on that occasion she imbibed the taste for picturesque scenery, and the obscure and wild superstitions of mouldering castles, of which she has made so beautiful a use in her romances."* After their return from the Continent, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe made a tour to the English Lakes, and

were highly gratified by the excursion. On these journeys, Mrs. Radcliffe almost invariably employed snatches of time at the inns where she rested, in committing to paper the impressions and events of the day, which she could afterwards review at leisure—a happy mode of prolonging those vivid pleasures of life, for which she had a fine relish. Such a habit, when it does not become too frequently introspective, or "sickly o'er" our enjoyments with "the pale cast of thought," tends to impart a unity to our intellectual being. It enables us to live over again the unbroken line of existence; to gather up the precious drops of happiness, that they be not lost; and, in the last moments of feeling and thought, to find "a glass which shows us many more." After Mrs. Radcliffe's return, she was prevailed on to give to her notes a regular form, and to publish them in a quarto volume, which met with a favourable reception.

The subsequent excursions of Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe were of less extent, and chiefly directed to the southern coast of England. Always once, and generally twice in the year, they took a journey through some beautiful or interesting country, limiting themselves to no particular course, but enjoying the perfect freedom, which was most agreeable to their tastes. Mrs. Radcliffe continued her little diary of these pleasant rovings, but without the slightest idea of publication, from which she generally shrunk as an evil. Some specimen of these

journals are now first presented to the reader, which will exhibit her mind in its undress—show her feelings as they were undisguised—and display her tact of observation and descriptive power, as existing simply for her own gratification. She always travelled with a considerable number of books, and generally wrote, while Mr. Radcliffe derived amusement from reading them.

The following notes are extracted from memoranda made on a little tour to the coast of Kent, in the autumn of 1797. They appear to have been written at the Inn at Hythe, while Mr. Radcliffe rode to Folkstone.

" September 1st. Began our tour to the sea-side. Between Gravesend and Rochester, the road, though farther from the river than about Northfleet, commands delightful views of it, expanding to great breadth, and in length reaching towards the Nore; ranges of distant hills in Essex and Kent finally close the prospect. The shores green and rich, and the water covered with sails tacking in all directions. Sweet afternoon. Continual villages; neat and pleasant country houses, with lawns and shrubberies and high-walled kitchen gardens. Views of the river. The dignity of these views now much increased; the distant hills run out into long ridges, and fold one behind the other. The river often seen between green-dipping hills, and then opening in vast majesty. Descended towards Rochester: solemn appearance

of the castle, with its square ghastly walls and their hollow eyes, rising over a bank of the Medway, grey and massive and floorless; nothing remaining but the shell. From the bridge looked on the right, up the Medway, winding broad between woody picturesque heights, sometimes shelving into points. On the left, the river busy with shipping, as it winds round the town, towards the Thames, and very broad.

"Made our way in the gig through the long narrow streets, and then, leaving Chatham on the left, mounted a very steep road, having wide views of Chatham, the docks and shipping, the new barracks—a town themselves—rising up a hill, with fortifications above its green mounds, with cannon and two small artificial hills, with flags. A great prospect, but too broken, and full of scars and angles of fortifications and other buildings and of excavations, to be quite pleasing. Further on, mounted Chatham Hill; the view wonderfully grand and various. The vale of the Medway, sweeping from Rochester to Sheerness, and the Nore, with the Essex hills beyond the Thames, bounding the scene to the north-west; one of the richest green landscapes, with wood and villages, I ever saw. The Thames itself visible for many miles, running sometimes almost parallel with the green, rich vale of the Medway, till it pours its broad waves into the sea opposite Sheerness. The fortress lying low upon this side of the Medway,

with its shipping distinctly seen by the help of a good glass; the sea, animated with ships beyond Southend, visible on the Thames opposite to Sheerness, almost upon the open sea: knew a sloop to be one, which we had seen sailing on the Thames by Greenhithe. Proceeded to Sittingbourn, through orchards, pastures and fragrant villages; the road frequently rose and fell, but the prospects were not considerable, except at Sittingbourn, an open, pleasant town.

"September 2.—Set out about eleven for Canterbury. The road very hilly, but through a most rich country of orchards, hop-grounds and pastures, villages and pretty houses, with lawns and gardens frequently occurring. Feversham, a mile on the left; saw it with its arm of the sea, and the sea itself, at a distance. Soon after began the long ascent of Boughton Hill; the summit rewarded us with a prodigious prospect. The hill itself wild with fern and coppice wood. Many woods also in the near prospect, intermingled with surprising richness of pasture, orchard and hops. Descending the other side, saw the tower of Canterbury cathedral, cresting a hill beyond; the body of the cathedral and the city not yet appearing; the tower became visible again at intervals, and, at length, the city, with its ancient gates and buildings. The cathedral itself looked very tall and solemn, like a spectre of ancient times, and seemed to hint of what it had witnessed. As we ap-

proached the gate, supported by octagonal towers, a long line of horses and soldiers poured from the high narrow arch. Proceeded, after dinner, to Dover over Barham Downs. Views into rich little valleys on the right; each village having its tall grey steeple. Noble mansions and parks frequently on the rising grounds.

"September 3.—Walked on the beach, watching the retiring and returning waves, and attending to the bursting thunder of the surge.

"Afterwards stood on a fortified point below the castle, immediately and high over the beach, commanding a vast marine horizon, with a long tract of the French coast, a white line bounding the blue waters. Below, on the right, Dover curves picturesquely along the sea-bay; the white and green cliffs rising closely over it, except near the castle, where they give place to hills, that open to a green valley, with enclosures and a pretty village, beyond which it winds away. The most grand and striking circumstances, as we stood on the point, were—the vast sea-view—the long shades on its surface of soft green, deepening exquisitely into purple; but, above all, that downy tint of light blue, that sometimes prevailed over the whole scene, and even faintly tinged the French coast, at a distance. Sometimes, too, a white sail passed in a distant gloom, while all between was softly shadowed; the cliffs above us broken and encumbered with fortifications; the sea viewed beyond them,

with vessels passing from behind; the solemn sound of the tide, breaking immediately below, and answered, as it were, at measured intervals, along the whole coast; this circumstance inexpressibly grand; the sound more solemn and hollow than when heard on the beach below. A fleet of merchantmen, with a convoy, passed and spread itself over the channel.

"Afternoon.—Walked towards Shakspeare's Cliff; the fleet still in view. Looked down from the edge of the cliffs on the fine red gravel margin of the sea. Many vessels on the horizon and in mid-channel. The French coast, white and high, and clear in the evening gleam. Evening upon the sea becoming melancholy, silent and pale. A leaden-coloured vapour rising upon the horizon, without confounding the line of separation; the ocean whiter, till the last deep twilight falls, when all is one gradual, inseparable, undistinguishable, grey.

"September 4.—Morning fine, calm, but become slightly cloudy. Walked to the topmost point of Shakspeare's Cliff, which appears a huge face of chalk over the sea. The way through fields; the path constantly rising, and leading near the edge of the cliffs; leaned sometimes over the railing, and looked down the precipices and on the blue sea; little boats and a sloop below. Coast of France visible; though always most clearly seen about sunset, when the west-

ern rays strike horizontally upon it, and light up all its features. Proceeding to the point of the cliff, had no longer the protection of a railing; bushes of hawthorn, mossed with yellow, alone fence the precipice. Putting our hands on the ground, we peeped over, ledge below ledge, abrupt down. Many of the ledges hung with plants and bushes. On the east, Dover—the bay—the castle—cliffs beyond—the boundless sea. In front, France, (Calais not visible,) a long tract sinking away to the West, and leaving a wider sea. Westward, charming view towards Beachy Head, the high and farthest promontory; black points of land, or rather low promontories, running out, one beyond another, into the sea; hills retiring to some margin, wild, heathy and broken; then the coast makes a fine sweep; and, after forming a vast bay, stretches out in the long, low point of land, called Dungeness, on which stands a light-house. Within this fine bay, Folkstone was visible, with Sandgate castle and village on the margin; then Hythe, a little more removed and higher; then an old castle, higher still and further from the shore; Romney, with its long marshes, beyond; and far beyond all, the high lands of Beachy Head, so eminent and bold, as scarcely to be known for a continuation of the same coast. The cliffs decline towards Folkstone, and there are none beyond, on this side of Beachy Head; but at some distance, from the shore, rise

broken and wild, though small hills. The best circumstances in the view are, first, the fine dark points and then the noble sweep of the coast, the dark levels of the marshes contrasting with the blue sea they skirt. Crows took wing for their nests in the cliffs below us. Thought of "the midway air;" no sea-fowl. The white surf beating far along the curving margin below to where other chalky points uprear themselves. Within land, the hills are brown and bleak and broken. The castle hills, on the land side, scarred by roads and far from picturesque; steep chalk hollows among the heath.

"About half past five in the afternoon, set off for Hythe, ten miles, chiefly along the high sea-cliffs, except that about a mile from Dover, we wound among brown hills, and, the cliffs sometimes sinking a little, we had catches of the sea and of France, between green dipping heights. Near Folkstone, descended a very long chalk hill, whence an enchanting view towards Beachy Head; the hills, retiring at some distance from the shore, open a curving bosom, and show towns and villages at their feet. Glad to get through the narrow steep streets of Folkstone, though the town is well situated. Proceeded in the dusk for Sandgate. Descended upon it—a white, new village, straggling along the beach, on each side of the wide road. Green hills rising all about it, and the place wide and free and pleasant; the sea beach appearing at

every step between the houses, on one side, and as easy an access to the hills, on the other side. On the beach an ancient castle, of several round towers, tyed and clustered together, and built low like Sandwich castle. Soldiers on guard at the gate; thick walls; cannon; all on the outside was green sod. The village being full, proceeded through deepening dusk to Hythe, a mile and a half farther, the road leading along the beach, at the foot of green hills; the sea appearing to flow even with us. Cottages by the road side and people straggling all the way. Came late to Hythe, and slept there. Its ancient church stands high, is a sea-mark and a picturesque object, its grey towers and gothic windows appearing among wood, and having a hill behind them."

In the autumn of 1798, Mrs. Radcliffe, accompanied by her husband, visited Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight and Winchester. Her journal on this little tour, which she seems to have particularly enjoyed, is too minute to give entire; but we select the following specimens.

"September 20—Set out in a beautiful afternoon for Portsmouth. Ascending to Esher by twilight, heard the bells sounding, with most melancholy sweetness, from the summit, and strengthening as we approached: every thing pensive, and tranquil.

"September 21, 1798. Sweet fresh morning. Left Cobham between seven and eight. Passed

under a picturesque bridge uniting the grounds of Paine's hill; high, rough, broken banks, topped with lofty trees, that hang over a light rustic bridge. Then enter upon a wide scene of heath, skirted here and there with rich distances; afterwards, many miles of heath, of a dull purple and dusty iron brown, with, sometimes, sudden knolls planted with firs; sometimes distances let in between bold hills. After Guildford, a large neat old town, and pretty Godalmin, at the end of a green level; steep hills to Haslemere and beyond it, but opening to vast prospects:—again, many miles of purple and rusty heath, with scarcely a tree or a hut. Nearer to Horndon, the country, though it continues to be heathy, is upon a grander scale, opening to distant ridges of high swelling hills, that probably overlook the sea; the hills in Hampshire, on the right, more cultivated; those in Sussex vast, sweeping and downy. Fine sunset from under clouds; the strong gleam almost blinded us as we descended in a hollow; the high, heathy banks receiving the full effulgence, while all below was gloom. The rays had already become much fainter, as we wound up a chalky precipice of great sweep and length, with steep downs rising over it; sheep on the summit showing themselves against the sky. A fine moon rose, and lighted us over the downs to Horndon. Heard only the sheep-bells, as the shepherd lad

was folding his flocks, and they came down from the hills. Slept at Horndon.

"September 22. Showers, but cleared up to a fine morning. Passed over two or three miles of the beautiful forest of Bere, the most picturesque of any we have seen in England, breaking in sweet woodland glades, all around to other hills and valleys, with patches of green-sward and heath: and to the bold ridges, that extend to the sea. A cottage, here and there, under the trees, with its grey curling smoke. As we mount Portsdown hill, views, on the left, towards Chichester and the bay of the sea; on the right, towards Southampton; retrospect of Bere forest in the valley, and ascending among the Hampshire hills most beautifully. Having reached the summit of Portsdown hill, the channel, the blue, high, sweeping ridge of the Isle of Wight, Spithead, Portsmouth, with its long embankments and spacious harbour, spread before our eyes. This view, though very grand, was not so striking as I expected. The hills do not advance near enough to the shore to hang over it, nor are they bold and broken in their shapes. We are not allowed to look down abruptly on the sea and the Isle of Wight; but view the first at four miles distance, after the eye has gradually passed over the flat lands below, and the land-locked harbours, which break the scene with comparative littlenesses. The shipping at Spithead appeared beyond the town, on the left, where a low

coast extends to the Chichester river, and towards St. Helens on the main sea. The Isle of Wight rises immediately in front of the picture. Farther is the chalky ridge, that sinks towards the Southampton water, and admits within its concave a tract of low coast, that extends towards the channel.

" Descend, and pass through the village of Cosham, at its foot. The road now becomes animated, and shows symptoms of a populous place; carts, coaches, horsemen, private carriages, soldiers, frequent signs and dusty air, instead of the lonely wilderness and breezy freshness of the hills and forest. Pass Portsea bridge, fortified and guarded, and so to Portsmouth, between other fortifications and the deeply-arched gates of the town. The ditches, the turfed embankments, crowned with rows of trees, reminded me of Bommel, in Holland. On the right, a view over the harbour, with huge, black prison-ships moored upon it. Passed through the long dusty old suburbs. The town itself old, level and somewhat mean, except the High-street, and about the seaward ramparts. Drove to the Fountain, a large and good inn, but could hardly get a room to dine in, as a West India and a Lisbon fleet were waiting to sail in a day or two. Went to the ramparts over the sea, crowded with officers of the army and navy, their wives and friends, and many well-dressed people attending to see the guns fired, in

honour of the coronation. From this place the shipping at Spithead in front, and the Isle of Wight, with the whole channel, are enchanting. Returned to the Inn.

"After dinner we left the horse and chaise at the inn, and walked down to the busy, dirty place, called the Point, where we got into a wherry, and so went over the harbour to the decked passage-boat, that was to carry us to the Isle of Wight. Adverse wind, but not much of it. Sat on the deck; a fine view of the town, the hospital, the forts and harbour, as we sailed out: the sea not rough. Hear the *he-hoes* of the sailors, afar in the channel, and the boatswain's shrill whistle. Passed through a part of the fleet; saw Sir Sidney Smith's fine ship, of immense size, with many other large ones round it. A cloudy sunset, but a gleam came out that fell upon the distant town and harbour, lighted up the sea, and touched the dark polished sides of all the ships; glanced athwart the western hills of the island, of which we were now gaining a view. Sailed down the channel for Cowes. The breeze gradually sunk, and we were becalmed. A full September moon rose, and shed its radiance on the waters. Glided along the woody steeps of the island, and saw many a sweeping bay and obscure valley beyond. Reached Cowes about nine; the approach to it, in a beautiful bay, striking, with its summer lights illuminating many windows, and its houses seeming to rise

steeply from the shore; many vessels at anchor in the bay; its slopes of scattered wood and pasture traced darkly round the bright clear water, and opening to an obscure valley. Landed at West Cowes, and went to the Vine Inn.

"September 23. Lovely day. Walked down to the shore and to the castle, a low grey tower on a rocky point, washed by the tide and shadowed by lofty elms; sentinels pacing under them, round the fort; fine view of Cowes and the bay. Thence mounted the rising ground over the shore, and walked a mile on the Yarmouth road, the views opening between trees and hedges to the dark lines of the New Forest; the Southampton water just opposite; eastward, Portsmouth faintly seen and the shipping at Spithead; the masts of the ships at Cowes caught among the trees below; the scene changing at every step, with the winding road; sometimes quite shut out, then smiling in the softest colours. All was in gradual shades of blue; the calm sea below, the shores and distant hills, stretching along a cloudless blue sky. Innumerable vessels and little sails, whose whiteness was just softened with the azure tint. It is impossible to express the beauty of those soft melting tints, that painted the distant perspective, towards Spithead, where sea and sky united, and where the dark masts and shapes of shipping, drawing themselves on the horizon, gave this softness its utmost effect.

Returned to dine at the Vine. Hired a good sailing-boat, to take us to Ryde; and, after dinner, sailed from the harbour. The points, that form the horns of the crescent, are of rough, dark rock and shrub. On a brow, over a wood, rose the picturesque tower of a modern castle, which we heard had lately been the residence of a sister of Admiral Macbride.* Glided with gentle breeze along the quiet and beautiful shores of the island, undulating in gentle slopes, covered with woods, to the water's edge; sometimes the lighter green of meadows and pastures stretched to the very bank, with here and there a cottage, a village church, or some ornamented house on an ascent among trees, above which rose the main hills of the island. The shore seldom runs out into points, but winds into easy bays, hung with woods, sometimes opening into sweet valleys, at others, advancing gently, with all their "green delights." to meet the passing sails. The coast immediately opposite is uninteresting and flat; the chalky ridge of Portsdown too distant and uniform to be grand. In the retrospect, indeed, the New Forest spread a dark line along the sea, and the western hills of the island, near Yarmouth, waved along the horizon, and two pointed summits of the Isle of Purbeck folded in behind them, making it difficult to discern which were the different coasts. Sea-fowl showing their white wings in the sun, as they circled over the waters. The breeze increased,

and we sailed finely among the now roughening, yet still green and almost transparent waves, along the shore. About half way, the coast returns into a green recess, and the waters wind away among the hills verdant with thick woods and enclosures. Here the Governor has built a picturesque tower above his woods. Hence extend along the shore the fine woods of the rector of a village on an ascent, where the tower of the church, almost hid in wood, insists upon being painted. Here imagination has nothing to do; we have only to preserve the impression of the living picture on the memory, in its own soft colours.

"Vessels of all sizes in the channel; the sailors' *he-ho*, the shrill whistle, and the rattle of cordage, as the sails were altered.

"Reached Ryde, about sunset. The town, among trees, rises from the shore up a long hill.

"At the inn, though very neat, accomodations were so inadequate, that we resolved to proceed in an open boat, which was about to return to Portsmouth. After taking a hasty dish of very good tea, went down a rough causeway, where many people were hurrying to the same boat, and such a crowd collected as alarmed me. A small party was, however, soon made up for a second boat; when, with little sails and two oars, we launched among the peaceful waters; tinged, on one side of the horizon with the red glow of sunset, and brightening on the other, under a broad moon

rising over the ships at Spithead. Passed through the fleet. Heard voices talking far off over the dim waves, and sometimes laughter and joviality; especially as we passed near a large ship, where lights, in the great cabin high above, told of the Captain and cheer. Distant lights appearing from the ships successively, as the evening deepened, like glowworms, and dotting the waters far around. As we drew near the shore, the music of French horns sounded with faint and melancholy sweetness; discovered at last to come from Monckton Fort. Landed after an hour and a half, at the rampart steps. Walk by moonlight on the rampart. Supped and slept at the Fountain, after a day the most delightful of the whole tour."

From Portsmouth Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe proceeded by Winchester to London. The following is her notice of the approach to Winchester, of the City and the Cathedral.

"Saw the City lying deep among the hollows, sheltered from the winds by bare hills, which half conceal the town at their feet. The King's house, once really a palace, with new houses, conspicuous on rising ground. Found out at last, through the dusk, the venerable Cathedral, with it's long roofs and very low tower, among fine old elms; a recess deep and retired. The streets clean and quiet; not a student visible. This decorum and neatness form a curious contrast to the bustle and tumult of Portsmouth, sending forth her people to the whole world;

while Winchester seems to be so much withdrawn from it. Went to the George, a noble inn: sat in a part of the Assembly room, severed off. Angelica Kauffman's drawings at each end. Walked by moonlight up the High-street; good, terminated by a fine old gate. Led by the sound of martial music to the court of the barracks in the old palace. The suburbs old and narrow.

"September 25. Sweet morning. Rose soon, and went, before breakfast, to see the Cathedral, a very large ancient fabric, not highly ornamented without. Walks round it of most noble, tall elms, forming almost a perfect archway and as high as the roof of the Church. Old men employed to weed them. The Cathedral, we were told, is fifteen feet longer than any other in England, but it did not appear to the eye so long as that of Canterbury. Nave of great height; painted windows poor, but the choir affords the most beautiful *coup d'œil* I ever saw; the carving of the dark stalls, and of the pulpit exquisitely fine; but the white filigranne-work of the altar is as delicate to the eye as point-lace. The altar-piece, by West, is Lazarus rising from the dead. The face well expresses the wanness and sharpness of death; but it might have been much more descriptive of reviving life, beginning to steal upon the langour of death; and of surprize and joyful hope, on beholding our Saviour. The attitude of Lazarus is indeed such, that he might be taken for a person dying rather than one returning to life. The counte-

nance of our SAVIOUR is full of placid benevolence; but the action should have been more expressive of command—of command, without effort. The principal female figure, who supports Lazarus, is clear, beautiful and natural; she looks up to our SAVIOUR, with tears of awe and gratitude; but the grief and anxiety she has suffered are not yet entirely chased from her countenance by joy and thankfulness; their impression was too deep to be suddenly effaced, though the cause of them is removed. The faces of the spectators do not sufficiently speak astonishment, awe and adoration, except that of one, seen remotely and obscurely, as if pressing forward more fully to ascertain the fact."

On the 10th of July, 1800, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe left home on a tour to the southern coast. The first evening they reached Capel;—after this the Journal proceeds.

"July 11th.—Fine airy morning. Set off at ten. Hilly road, often narrow and shady. Upon the eminences views over the tops of oaks to mountainous hills and promontories, covered nearly to their summits with thick, woody inclosures; whenever the bank-trees opened, caught blue, peeping hill-tops, or mountainous lines, coloured with a lovely blueish haze, and seen enchantingly beyond the dark, tufted foliage of majestic oak. Passed several open, pleasant villages. Every where, vegetation seems in the utmost luxuriance; every

cottage-window arboured with rose, or woodbine. The South Downs, at a distance, heaved up their high, blue lines, as ramparts worthy of the sublimity of the ocean, from whose power they seemed to guard the island. Dined at a little inn in a village—Billinghurst. Terrible road after this; flinty, sandy, and over frequent hills, but with some recompensing prospects. As we drew nearer the South Downs, distinguished the smooth green of their swelling summits from the dark woods below, and in the hollows of the hills, over which the evening sun threw rich lights and shadows. Abundance of wood round the villages; good gardens to the cottages.

" Came at length to Bury, only four miles from Arundel; but our horse wanted rest after so toilsome a road, and we drank tea, before beginning to mount one of the prodigious hills we had long seen. Came at last to the fine downs on its summit, whence a world seemed to lie before us. Grandeur, grace and beauty united in this wonderful view. We could just distinguish doubtfully in the twilight, at great distance, the channel between the coast and the Isle of Wight, a line of light upon the scene, with faint cloudy lands of the island beyond. We soon entered upon the domain of Arundel, the road winding finely among its pompous woods and rough forest lawns. Partly by the tediousness of the ascent and partly by our delay upon the summit, these four miles occupied

an hour and a half. We did not see the castle from the road, but the woods and the remains of old gateways were perceptible. A church of great extent, apparently old and grand. The main street of the town fearfully steep. Reached an excellent inn, about half past nine.

"July 12. Fine day, but very hot. Went in the morning to see the castle, which stands on an eminence, near the town, about four miles from the sea. An irregular avenue leads to a solemn old gateway very deep and bending like those at Mentz, which, with the ruinous tower over it, mantled with ivy, looked well in the dark perspective of the trees. Low arched doors in the gateway, at the sides; loops for archers and abundance of room for them in the immense thickness of the walls.

"The library is in a long gallery, where hang some portraits; among them James the Second; his first wife, Lord Clarendon's daughter, handsome, but with an air of discontent; Elizabeth of Bavaria and her husband; two Cardinals, one of them a Howard. In many of the rooms, the walls, wherever a window occurs, are lined with dark mahogany, which forms the cases into frames, as it were, for the landscape seen through them, but in general looks brown and poor: little wood visible from this side of the castle. We passed through several noble apartments, not quite finished, and others indifferently furnished; the walls of

several, however, wainscoted, chair-high, with beautiful mahogany. The pillars and Gothic arch-work of the music-gallery exquisitely carved.

"Monday, July 14.—Cool, cloudy morning. Set off, at eleven, for Worthing. A flat, uninteresting coast. Drove partly over the sands, the tide being down. Larks singing among the corn, near the shore. A sea-gull fishing in the salt-pools, near the sands. Within a few miles of Worthing discovered the sweep of grey downs about Brighton, that form a back-ground to the large bay; within which, Brighton, Worthing, &c. are seated. Soon after, distinguished the dark masts of vessels lying before Worthing, some of which, seen upon the lighter grey of the distant hills, forming that fine bay, were picturesque, and seemed to be of consequence, but proved to be only small sloops. Horses and a carriage upon the sands informed us of our nearer approach to Worthing, which stands well upon the beach; the tide out, and a fine plain of sand spread before the village. It was animated by groups of the busy and the idle; little boats along the edge of the tide, others at anchor: altogether it was a very lively and amusing scene. A fleet of ships, said to be transports, convoyed by two men-of-war, came upon the distance, and clouded the horizon for some time, but were too far off to be interesting. Dined at a pleasant hotel near the beach, with a grass-plot before it. Amused with numerous parties, who had come

from Brighton in sociables, chariots and gigs, to dine, and who exhibited themselves on the grass-plot under our window. After dinner, and after seeing the tide flow up the beach, very high, set off for Little Hampton, by an inner road, through pleasant, shady lanes, between corn fields, with a range of distant hills on one side, their feet darkened with wood. Delightful afternoon. After a sweet ride, met the sea again, at the Beach House, where we drank tea, supped, and slept.

"July 15. Lovely day. Left Little Hampton about one for Worthing. Could not go by the sands, the tide being too near. Stopped to dine at the village of Terring, at a small house with a garden. After dinner, walked up a high hill to see a celebrated prospect. Gained the summit of the sheep-down, and stood on the top, whence we saw the whole compass of the horizon and such a stretch of sea and landscape! The whole southern sky, and the blue sea, extending from the Isle of Wight (its faint blue-lands rising towards the west) to the white face of what we took to be Beachy Head, but afterwards learned to be Seaford Cliffs: beneath, lay sloping towards the sea, a landscape of exquisite hues, of corn and thick hedge-rows of woods and intermingled villages. Within the scope of the bay, towards Beachy Head, Worthing, Shoreham, Brighton, on the sea edge, backed with downs. Farther on, the hills begin to whiten, and rise into the high face

guarding the entrance of Newhaven river, which seems to fall into a fine bay. To the west, Little Hampton, the woods, town and castle of Arundel; further on, amidst a long tract of woody country, the spire of Chichester Cathedral; further still, the high point of Portsdown-hill, but not Portsmouth. The whole of the Isle of Wight clearly within view; the ridge of hills divided into three parts. Spithead may be distinguished, it is said, at times. To the north, we looked down into woody valleys at the feet of the Downs, and saw Mr. Shelly's new mansion, among his fine woods.

"Went back to our cottage inn delighted. Went to Worthing to tea. The tide just turning, the blue sea flowing almost even with our windows. Parties again from Brighton at our inn. Lovely evening. When the tide was lower, the sands were gay with fine company. In another part, a cricket match going on upon the sands. Fishing vessels at anchor. Saw the Isle of Wight under the evening light, more distinctly in some respects, than before, yet like a dark cloud rising out of the sea."

From Worthing, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe went by short journeys to Seaford. The following reflections, prompted by the "melancholy greatness of nature," on a little excursion by the shore, will strikingly illustrate the thoughtful and pious cast of the writer.

"July 19.—Went to see the rural village of Al-

friston, over such a road as I never saw before; and leading over such hills! Two men helped the chaise down one of them. Some finely spreading oaks about the village, which stands on an eminence in a green valley backed by grey downs. Dined at a very old inn; had seats brought on the ground, before and after dinner. Walked the greatest part of the way back to Seaford; saw the sun set behind one of the vast hills. The silent course over this great scene awful—the departure melancholy. Oh God! thy great laws will one day be more fully known by thy creatures; we shall more fully understand Thee and ourselves. The God of order and of all this and of far greater grandeur, the Creator of that glorious sun, which never fails in its course, will not neglect us, His intelligent, though frail creatures, nor suffer us to perish, who have the consciousness of our mortal fate long before it arrives, and of Him. He, who called us first from nothing, can again call us from death into life.

"In this month, on the 24th of July, my dear father died two years since: on the 14th of last March, my poor mother followed him: I am the last leaf on the tree! The melancholy greatness with which I was surrounded this evening, made me very sensible of this."

From Seaford the tourists proceeded to Eastbourne, and visited Beachy Head. The journal contains the following short description, which

places a striking scene before us, with a few strokes of a masterly pencil.

"July 20.—Dined at the little village of Friston, seated deep down between immense hills, in a valley, that about a mile off opens to the sea, at the dangerous place called Burling Gap. A Prussian captain, whose vessel had been wrecked at the foot of Beacky, as our landlord called it, had been nine weeks at our poor little inn. The village had been almost buried in the snow, which came down upon the village from the steep sides of the hills; then the thaw nearly overwhelmed it. From the summit of a hill, on our way to Eastbourne, immense retrospect of sea and land. Surprising appearance of the sea, which seemed to rise so high, that it could scarce be distinguished from clouds; ships looked like birds in the sky. Nothing seen but great and simple objects—the round sea—the huge uncultivated headlands."

The ascent of Beachy Head, and the view from it, are described at some length in the Journal; but the following scene on the shore is more peculiar and striking.

"July 23. Walked to the shore and along it, with a hope of having some sight of the sea—front of Beachy Head from beneath it, though four or five miles off. The beach impassable by any sort of carriage. A shore of ruins under the cliffs, which gradually rise from what is called the Wish-House, a small white building standing sweetly

near the beach, to the summit of the Cape. Large blocks of granite imbedded on the shore, and extending to the waves, which rage and foam over them, giving one dreadful ideas of shipwreck. Sometimes, patches of gravelly sand, or pebbles, soon ending against masses of granite, or chalk, between which it is difficult, and not always possible to walk; some of them must be stepped upon. Within half a mile of the great front, unable to proceed farther; sat down on a block, wearied out, desiring William to go on; he was soon hid by a turn of the cliffs. Almost frightened at the solitude and vastness of the scene, though *Chance** was with me. Tide almost out; only sea in front; white cliffs rising over me, but not impending; strand all around a chaos of rocks and fallen cliffs, far out into the waves; sea-fowl wheeling and screaming; all disappeared behind the point, beyond which, is the great cliff; but we had doubled point after point, in the hope that this would be the next, and had been much deceived in the distances by these great objects; after one remote point gained, another and another succeeded, and still the great cliff was unattained; the white precipices beautifully varied with plants, green, blue, yellow and poppy. Wheat-ears flew up often from the beach: *Chance* pursued them. At length, William returned, having been nearly, but not

* Her favourite Dog.

quite, in front of the great promontory. Slowly and laboriously we made our way back along the beach, greatly fatigued, the day exceedingly hot, the horizon sulphurous, with lowering clouds; thunder rolled faintly at a distance."

The same afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe continued their tour to Hastings. The following is the picturesque view of their journey from Bexhill to Hastings, in the evening.

"From Bexhill, descended between the high, shrubby banks of lanes, so narrow, that the wheels seemed to fill the passage; in some places a horse could not have passed; we met no carriage, or we must have backed a great way. Breathing honeysuckles on the banks; deep twilight. Heard the sea frequently on our right when the wheels stopped. We had before passed Pevensey levels and the town, with its fine old castle: towers in ruins. On our approach, it reminded one of Newark castle. Near eleven, before we reached Hastings; no moon; starlight; milky-way very lucid; seemed to rise out of the sea. Solemn and pleasing night-scene. Glow-worms, in great numbers, shone silently and faintly on the dewy banks, like something supernatural. Judgment of Shakspeare in selecting this image to assist the terrific impression in his ghost-scene. May be called earth-stars. The coast patrole passed us. How far to Hastings? Three miles. Farther on had a narrow escape: horse and chaise suddenly plunged down a bank into the pebbles; nearly overtuned. Hap-

pily our horse stood quite still, after the shock, and until we had ascertained the rugged course we were in; I walked the rest of the way. Pass under grand, dark rocks, disjointed and starting up in splintered points, and huge masses. These rocks, near the beach and over the road, continue to where the houses open."

From Hastings Mrs. Radcliffe proceeded along the coast to Dover, to which place she was extremely partial, and thence by Feversham to London. After minutely detailing her little adventures, she thus concludes her journey:—

"In all our tour saw nothing so fine and beautiful as the views of sea and land from the Downs over the East Bourne. The sweet repose of the landscape and sea-bay to Hastings, and the grandeur of the various views, on all sides between the valleys of the South Downs, and even above these summits, circling nearly the whole horizon, with soft blue waves."

In the autumn of this year, Mrs. Radcliffe spent a fortnight at Little Hampton, and returning by Haslemere, thus describes the country immediately southward of that place.

"Three miles of continual ascent, or descent of almost tremendous hills, long and steep opening to vast distances, now obscured in ruin, but sublime in their obscurity—

'Where wilds immeasurably spread,
Seem lengthening, as we go.'—GOLDSMITH.

'These high, wild hills and rough uneven roads,
Drag out our miles and make them wearisome.'

CYMBELINE.

"This is the country, from which Collins drew his first ideas, and fed his early taste for the wild and the grand.

'O! vales and wild-woods, would he say,
In yonder grave your Druid lies." COLLINS.

"Have never seen such wild woody mountains before in England; they resemble the forests of Wetteravia more than any I have seen, but with this difference, that there the mountains are more pointing, abrupt and rocky, and that here the road often winds round the edge of the hills into deep and most picturesque glades, where comfortable cottages lie snug beneath noble trees, and ruddy children play under the branches, among the huge timber felled on the ground, the Woodman's implements and the thatched hovel. Sylvan, or other rural industry appeared in every hamlet. Clouds of smoke from places, where wood was charred, sometimes darkened the air. This is the most woody tract in Sussex, and probably in England. The eastern end of the country has no wood: the immense hills stand bare in all their grandeur."

The following notes are extracted from the Journal of a Tour, made in the autumn of 1801, to Southampton, Lymington, and the Isle of

Wight. The two first days' journey supply no matters of interest: in the afternoon of the third day, 29th Sept. the travellers thus approach the beautiful neighbourhood of Southampton:

"At length, the blue hill tops of the Isle of Wight appeared faintly on the horizon, over the stretching forest masses of the near scene. At the sixth mile-stone, entered a part of the New Forest; beautiful woods and glades; thick trees shadowing the road; wherever the woods opened, especially on the right and in front, other rich masses and others still beyond, rose pompously. One of the perspectives in front particularly fine, as we saw our road descending among the deep woods, and other woods rising up the hills and crowning the bold summit of an eminence, that seemed to rear itself over all the forest. The deep gloom of stormy clouds and fleeting lights of sunshine extremely various; the sun often shedding a misty glory over the solemn woods in the west, while sudden and awful shadows dwelt wide over other summits. Passed a most picturesque hamlet of green mossed cottages scattered round a little lawn, where the woods opened, but closed again in thicker shades. Four miles of this sweet scenery, when we entered upon heath, and came upon a high level common, extending a mile, or two, that opened upon a vast prospect on either hand: in front, all the hills of the Isle of Wight, from east to west, swelled along the horizon. On

the right, the wavy woods of the New Forest bounded all the western and northern view. The richness of this vast mass of tufted woods is indescribable. Part of the Southampton water was visible on this side, flowing between wooded banks with villages on its edge. On the left, the view over the vale was not so grand, but more diversified by the light green of pastures and by frequent villages and white mansions among the woods, that spread among the gentle slopes. Showers and sunshine alternately dimmed and brightened the hills. The splendour of the sun fell, at times, upon the forest, in the west, while a heavy shower darkened an open valley in the east, softened the verdure of the nearer hills, and spread over the woods and meadows and villages a gradual chastening tint, that was enchanting. At length, the spire of the great church of Southampton appeared over the woods in front, while the town was yet unseen."

After a short notice of Southampton, where Mrs. Radcliffe remained only two nights, the Journal proceeds:—

"After breakfast, set off for Lyndhurst; passed along the head of the bay, and by Millbrook, then the long bridge and causeway After a long hill, descend upon the New Forest, and pass between open lawns and woods, capping every little eminence, and spreading round like those of Kensington Gardens. Longed for the speed of a stag,

to bound along these lawns and endless forest-glades. Dined at the Crown, in a parlour opposite to the inn, which was full; some forest-commissioners here. The Princess Sophia of Gloucester expected at the King's House; shown to us by an elderly woman. Good rooms; ancient furniture. A wood fire on the hearth of the Princess's room and on that of the dining-room below. All these rooms look under thick lofty trees to the forest woods, that rise close over the village, towards Brokenhurst. Oak-benches at the upper-end of Rufus'-hall, where the forest courts are held—the most ancient part o the building. A large iron stirrup, called Rufus's stirrup.

"From Lyndhurst, the ride to Brokenhurst is through five miles of pompous forest groves, of which grandeur is the characteristic, mingled with great beauty. The forest crowds over the road. Only two spots the whole way where the trees retire round lawns. Hence to Lymington: the country is inclosed; but still the lanes are forest-lanes. Passed Boldre, leaving Mr. Gilpin's a mile on the left, and soon came in view of the Isle of Wight, with Lymington, and its neat cupola-church. Came in at dusk; made our way in the market-place, between waggons and cheese piled up for the morrow's fair.

"Oct. 3. Left Lymington at half-past three, in the packet for Yarmouth; after viewing the fair, and the fine booths of trinkets and plate. Passed

many charming residences among the woody banks on the left. Glided smoothly under a light summer air; the evening splendid, and the scene most lovely. The Needles are vast dark blocks of rock, tall, but not pointed, standing out from the island in the sea. Hurst castle, with its dark line of peninsula stretching athwart the Channel. The Needles become more huge seen against the light, with the point of the Alum Rock in shade. These objects, with the high line of the Isle of Purbeck, faintly grey beyond, composed a perfect picture, with most harmonious colouring. The light silver grey of the sea first met the eye, then the dark Alum Rock projected to meet Hurst Castle, whose towers were pencilled in deep grey beyond, which softened away to the heights of Purbeck, that closed the perspective. After sun-set, streaks of brightest crimson appeared on the sky, behind clouds, black and swelling; the upper shores clear, though dark. Approached Yarmouth, under this sweet twilight. The western shore of Yarmouth goes off in a darkly wooded point, with many white houses, or cottages, among the trees. Landed on Yarmouth quay, small, and crowded with people. Dutch sentinels on the little fort over the quay and rampart of the old casle. Our inn built by Sir Robert Holmes, governor of the island, on the scite, I fancy, of Henry the Eighth's old castle. Our horse and gig came in another packet.

"Oct. 4. After breakfasting at Yarmouth, set out in a bright morning for the Light-house above the Needles. As we rose, the Channel and the English coast, from Portsdown Hill (known by its long chalk-pit) to the shore near Pool in Dorsetshire, lay before us, bounded partly by the New Forest and thick inclosures, and spreading with towns and villages and innumerable seats and farms, with a vast extent of the northern part of the Isle of Wight, and with Southampton Bay, to Lymington, here and there a white house on the shore, snug under trees, and other house-tops peeping out, almost wherever I directed the glass, above the forest. Discovered Lyndhurst steeple, with the large white house at Mount Royal, 'bosomed high in tufted trees.' The whole country, from the neighbourhood of Southampton to the West, rises gradually from the shore into a line of horizon little varied; but the richness and cheerful beauty of this widely extending amphitheatre, seen over the calm blue Channel, with here and there a white sail and a ship of war at anchor, permit no desire for greater variety. As we rose upon the down, this scene enlarged: the Isle of Purbeck became more majestic; its outline is more mountainous than that of the Isle of Wight, with a range of high awful cliffs below. It was now tinged with misty azure, but the sun brightened all the sea before it. Two of its summits appeared finely in the perspective from Cowes' Point. The

effect of the sea so close on either hand of this vast western promontory, called the Needle Point, or the Alum rock, running out upon the ocean like a long narrow causeway, is awful. You have a wonderful and rather a painful sensation of the narrowness of the earth that bears you, though it may be half a mile, or more, in width. As the Needle rocks were not visible from the Light-house, we left the chaise, and descended the down half a mile, and looked upon them. On their summits, which now seem sharp, and splintered into ledges and points, perceived with the glass numbers of dark birds quietly seated; not one took wing, or uttered any cry. Perhaps it was owing to our great height, that the Needles disappointed us, and appeared insignificant, compared with the grander objects around us: listened to the surge breaking below, round the feet of these rocks. Did not venture near enough the edge to see into Alum Bay. Drove to Freshwater Bay. The inn at Freshwater Gate in the bottom is a little cottage, with two or three rooms apart on the beach. A ruinous and desolate shore spreads and rises on either hand. Mounted a promontory, which confined our view from the inn, on the right. Greatness and desolation. As the tide was coming in, could not see a cave in the cliff below. Returned to Yarmouth at five."

The following is Mrs. Radcliffe's account of a visit to the tract called Undercliffe.

"Oct. 6. Set off for the Undercliffe, a tract of shore formed by fallen cliffs, and closely barricadoed by a wall of rock of vast height. Entered upon it about a mile from Kniton, and found ourselves in such a scene of ruin, as we never saw before. The road is, for the most part, close to the wall of rock, which seems to lie in loose horizontal strata, with frequent perpendicular fissures, which threaten the trravelle with destruction, as he passes sometimes beneath enormous masses, that lean forward. This is the boundary on one side of the road; on the other side, is an extremely irregular and rugged descent of half a mile towards the sea: on this side, there are sometimes what may be called amphitheatres of rock, where all the area is filled with ruins, which are, however, frequently covered with verdure and underwood, that stretch up the sides, with the wildest pomp, and shelter here a cottage, here a villa among the rocky hillocks. We were two hours and a half in going from Kniton to the inn at Steephill, five miles, W. leading the horse almost the whole way: a Druid scene of wildness and ruin. Sometimes the road led us into vast semicircular bays of rock, filled up entirely to the eye with wild wood and broken hillocks; the sea below appearing to stretch so from point to point, that it seemed impossible to make our way out, till the road led us under projecting crags of the promontory into other recesses, and, winding under these threaten-

ing walls, again led near the sea, on which I looked down, not without terror. Descended upon the romantic and sweet village of St. Lawrence, among thickets on a hill, near the shore. Beautiful cottages, covered with ivy even to the chimney tops, with each its garden, and some with little orchards hung with golden fruit; clear, gushing rills passing under the shades to the sea. A mile beyond, the beautiful village of Steephill, in the same style. Went to the New Inn, standing on a hill, with a wide sea view in front, half a mile off, and at the foot of St. Boniface Downs, whose steep green sides rise to a tremendous height behind it, having below them, on the other hand, the little woody village of St. Boniface, with its beautiful cottages and villas."

The remaining memoranda of the visit to Steephill, are too long to be extracted, but contain some beautiful descriptions, and several vivid notices of the effects of light, as for example:—"The sea in gloom, with gleams of cold silvery light upon it, where the clouds began to break: these lights finely marked the distances on the grand surface of the ocean, as they fell in blue lines." Again, "Sunlights on the sea, and, now and then, bright green spots between black shadows;"—in the evening "a fiery sun-set with *sullen* clouds." The following short recollection of a storm is full of feeling and power:—

"After dark, a storm, with thunder and lightning;

listened to the strong, steady force of the wind and waves below. The thunder rolled and burst at intervals, and often the sound was so mingled with that of the wind and waves, as to be scarcely distinguished from it. No complaining of the wind, but a strong and awful monotony. Lightning, very blue, showed at moments the foaming waves far out: utter darkness between the flashes. Glad to hear from the other side of the house, cheerful voices talking, or singing. When the storm subsided, the thunder rolled away towards the Sussex coast. This display of the elements was the grandest scene I ever beheld; a token of God directing his world. What particularly struck me was the appearance of irresistible power, which the deep monotonous sound of the wind and surge conveyed. Nothing sudden; nothing laboured; all a continuance of sure power, without effort."

From Steephill the travellers proceeded to Ryde, where Mrs. Radcliffe made the following characteristic remarks:—"Rejoice to look again on a peopled sea, and prefer this point of the Isle, for animated and beautiful scenery, to any other. The back of the island has very extensive views; and, for that extensiveness, may be called grand; but there are no mountain lines, no shapes, that overwhelm us with admiration: the want of wood forbids them magnificence. The undercliff is wild and romantic, rather than grand; but the sea horizon from it, is often very grand. Upon the whole,

I prefer rich beauty to wild beauty, unless accompanied by such shapes of grandeur as verge upon the sublime. Lovely sun-set; a roseate, melting into saffron and shades of blue; some light purple streaks. Below, the dark woody line of shore bending towards Cowes; the bay at its feet, purpled from the clouds. All this seen from our bed-room windows, above and between lofty trees."

Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe returned by Salisbury. We extract from the journal the approach to Salisbury and the description of its Cathedral.

"Oct. 13. Rainy morning; cleared up to a lovely afternoon. Left Southampton before twelve, for Salisbury. Turned out of the road, at the village of Totting, and soon entered upon the skirts of the New Forest, but saw no avenues there, no lovely forest-glades, rather forest-land, than forest; but we had often rich woody views into the vale, near Southampton on the right, and continual forests rising on the left; and a few miles from Plaitford, came upon some of the sweetest scenery of the New Forest. Upon a wild glade, touching effect of misty light, beyond its gloom. Sometimes an opening in the near copses showed a distant perspective of deep shade. About five miles from Salisbury, gain the summit of a high ridge, and look at once upon a new and grander ridge large and sharper hills rising to a great extent, with the vast Cathedral and lofty spire of Salisbury in front. We had lingered so much on our road,

that as we entered Salisbury, a new moon gave us faintly the shadow of its sublime Cathedral, with its pointed roofs and its pinnacles and its noble spire. How could Mr. Gilpin prefer a tower to it! Saw, as we passed, the moonlight shining through the windows of the aisles and touching aslant the lofty spire, while the elms beside it were in deep shade. Had entered the city by a deep Gothic gateway, and saw others lighted up in perspective, in a street, out of which we turned to our inn, the Antelope—a very good inn.

"Oct. 14. Went, in the rain, to the Cathedral; entered it just as the organ and chaunt struck up; very fine, but not so solemn, as at Canterbury. The church most light, beautiful and elegant; but it did not affect me, like the solemn simplicity, the awful roofs and grand perspective of Canterbury. The tone of the organ, too, very good, but did not listen for its swelling and dying sounds, as through the vast aisles of Canterbury; there is not space for them to roll in, and murmur afar off, as there. Was much struck with the effigies of the dead, laid out on each side of the great aisle, from pillar to pillar. Having been brought by Mr. Wyatt from St. Mary's Chapel, that terminates the choir, they have been placed on a raised step, that seems indeed to have been originally designed for them. The pillars of this Cathedral are in Gothic clusters, not of the slender form, that afterwards prevailed, but, as Mr. Gilpin says,

"when Saxon heaviness first began to give way." Their effect is elegant. They are washed of a stone colour, as are the walls and roofs; the last are without tracery, and are marked as if of brick. The arches are obtusely pointed, having one narrow vein of open work running near the outer edge, which gives lightness to them."

After an attempt to visit Stonehenge, which was frustrated by a violent storm, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe returned, in the leisurely manner which they preferred, to London.

In the autumn of 1802, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe took a journey to Leicester and Warwick, and returned by Woodstock and Oxford. From the journal kept during that tour, the following descriptions of Kenilworth, of one or two scenes in Warwick Castle, and of Blenheim, are perhaps most worthy of selection. Both Warwick Castle and Blenheim are described with great minuteness; but both these mansions are so generally known, that it is thought sufficient to extract such portions of the accounts of them only, as are most characteristic of the writer's feelings and tastes.

Kenilworth.

"Left Coventry at half past twelve, and passed through a pleasant well-wooded country to Kenilworth. Almost every village over-topped with lofty trees. Passed for some miles over Kenilworth Chase, by a straight road of noble breadth,

bordered with forest. Part of this forest was, in former times, cut down, in order to dislodge robbers. The gate of the castle, to which we drove up, is in the grey square tower, built on a high rock, by Leicester. This gate being now a residence, the former entrance by it to the court of the Castle is stopped up, and we passed through the garden, at its side, into the green and open area, that was once the grand court of the castle. Hence we looked up to the noble masses of ruin, that still stand proudly, and form three broken and irregular sides of what was once the inner court. Of the buildings that formed the fourth side, there are now no vestiges, except the *knolliness* of the ground, where they once stood, may be called such, and except part of the buildings still called Leicester's, these having been built by him. These are a fine mass of ruined walls, covered with thickest ivy, on the left; on the right, stands a more noble mass, with three lofty arches in a row, going the whole depth of the wall, sixteen feet: this is called Cæsar's Tower, and, though the oldest part of the Castle, appears, on the outside, the freshest and newest. It is of a greyer and more solid stone than the rest. This, too, is finely hung with ivy. Between these masses, in perspective, forming the third side of the court, is the most picturesque remainder of the castle, though Cæsar's Tower is the grandest. This was once the great hall, or banqueting-room. Its three beautiful pointed

window-frames are there still; and the arch of a Gothic door, most elegantly twined with vine-leaves, all now hung and clustered with the richest drapery of ivy. The trunk of some of this ivy is of great thickness, and it is so old, that in some places, the branches are sapless and leafless, and the grey stalks seemed to crawl about the ruin in sympathy. Other remains of buildings partly connect the three sides of the court, and are intermingled and crowned with alder and ash plants. This view of the ruin was very striking; the three chief masses great and solemn, without being beautiful. They spoke at once to the imagination, with the force and simplicity of truth, the nothingness and brevity of this life—'generations have beheld us and passed away, as you now behold us, and shall pass away: they thought of the generations before them, as you now think of them, and as future ages shall think of you. We have witnessed this, yet we remain; the voices that revelled beneath us are heard no more, yet the winds of Heaven still sound in our ivy.' And a still and solemn sound it was as we stood looking up at these walls."

SCENES IN WARWICK CASTLE.

"After leaving the great hall, went, on the left, into the chapel—a plain memorable chapel, lined with oak; then to the armoury, a long, narrow gallery, or rather a suite of narrow rooms, communicating by small Gothic doorways, and ex-

tending, perhaps, nearly the whole length of the Castle, with tall windows of painted glass, bowing out into the court of the Castle. The walls of this armoury were covered with weapons of various kinds and sizes, from the Indian war-spear, to the Highland dirk, with a knife and fork tucked into the same sheath. But what struck me most was near the end of the gallery (when it makes a sudden turn into the tower that terminates the castle), where appeared before me a broad, yet dark staircase of oak, and at the foot of it, as if guarding the passage, a large figure in complete armour, the beaver down, and a sword in its hand! The general twilight, with the last western gleam breaking through the painted window at the foot of the stair-case, and touching the bronze, gave full effect to this scene, and heightened the obscurity of the stairs, in perspective. This armour came from Germany; our conductor knew no more. Saw the brass coat, shot-proof, worn by Lord Brooke when he was shot in the eye during his attack upon Lichfield Cathedral. On the opposite side, a complete suit of black armour, the knees with projecting points: could learn nothing of its history. Left the building with regret. Paused again in the court to admire the beautiful lofty acacias and other noble trees surrounding the lawn, and the most majestic towers forming the grand front. The octagon tower, rising in the angle of the walls near the house-door, the most beautiful,

as far as regards proportion; the one nearest the house the most venerable and warlike. Near the summit an embattled overhanging gallery, where formerly, no doubt, sentinels used to pace during the night, looked down upon the walls of the Castle, the rivers and the country far and wide, received the watch-word from the sentinel, perched in the little watch-tower, higher still and seeing farther in the moonlight, and repeated it to the soldiers on guard on the walls and gates below. Before those great gates and underneath these towers, Shakspeare's ghost might have stalked; they are in the very character and spirit of such an apparition, grand and wild and strange; there should, however, have been more extent. Stayed before these grey towers till the last twilight.

Blenheim.

"Lovely day. At eleven, walked through the Park. The triumphal arch, at the entrance, has too much the air of a merely handsome gateway; the convenient division into passages in the ordinary mode of considerable gates, leaves nothing appropriate to Fame. The view of the Park, with the turrets of the palace, of the mass of wood beyond, the verdant sweep of the intermediate ground, that descends to the water, with the water itself and the Palladian bridge beyond, is very striking, a few paces after the entrance. The palace itself, though here seen beyond and

over clumps of trees, appears to greater advantage than when more distinctly viewed: its many turrets, now beheld in clusters, have an air of grandeur, which they want when separately observable. As we advance, the groves on the left thicken and have a forest-like shade; but the view on the rising ground, including the celebrated pillar, is too much broken into parts. Though the ground rises finely, its great flowing lines are spoiled by too many groves; there should have been one, or two, grand masses of wood, and the rest sweeping lawn. This park is not comparable with that at Knole, either for swell and variety of surface, or for grandeur and disposition of wood; no such enchanting groves of plane and birch and oak, as there. But a very grand avenue extends from the Oxford gate to the palace. On entering the garden, of finest turf and shade, pass the east front to the lawn of the back front, opening to a view of distant hills between the high groves. The back front of the house much the best; more simple, and, seen in perspective, very good. Parterres in the flower-garden, with basket-work round them, in the pretty fashion of the last century in France. Hence, through deep shade to the sheep-walk, where the light opens upon the country, and then soon look down upon another bridge and water. This walk continues on the brow, for about half a mile, very sweetly, and leads to a sloping lawn shaded with the noblest

trees in the garden. More struck with this spot than with any, except about the large lake. First, two poplars of most astonishing height, much larger than those in the avenue at Manheim. At their feet, the light green spray foliage of these deciduous cypresses had a most charming effect. Near the poplars, a lofty plane, but inferior in height. Near this, a surprising Portugal laurel swept the ground, and spread to a vast circumference; a very extraordinary tree for size. Delighted with the steep green slope, the water and bridge below, the abrupt woolly banks opposite, and, above all, the grandeur of the shades. Pass the bridge: on the right, the massy rocks of the cascade, but no water; on the left, the water winding beyond the woody banks; a highly tufted island, with a wooden building near its margin, very picturesque.

"Over a sofa, in the dining-room, a large family picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds The Duke seated, and turning to the Marquis of Blandford, when a boy, with an air and countenance in which the nobleman and the good man are blended; more pleasing and dignified than Romney's portrait of him. The Duchess, of pleasing countenance, and much sweetness in her eyes. Of the children, the most striking is Lady Charlotte (Nares), five or six years old, playfully holding a mask, and laughing behind it, as she frightens her sister, who draws back in doubt and with some apprehension

but calmly. The figure of Lady C. has all the natural, playful grace of a child, though the attitude is rather overstrained. Vandyke's portrait of Charles the First's Queen is not so fine as his picture of her in the domestic drawing-room at Warwick Castle.

"It is in the superior colours and expressive drawing of the tapestry, that Blenheim chiefly excels the interior decorations of other great mansions. That in the state room is from Brussels, and most exquisite; presented by that city to the great Duke. It entirely covers the lofty walls. Each compartment displays a different siege or battle, and the distance, fading often into blue hills, is so finely shaded, that the whole seems almost a living prospect, and that you might step into the scene. The figures in the foreground are nearly as large as life, and chiefly portraits: they are admirably grouped, and the action not only spirited and natural, but often full of character. The Duke is always on horseback, and has the same air of countenance—attentive and eager; the features somewhat thin. The face of a French spy, under examination before the Duke, is admirable; watchful, sedate, and firm. In the next compartment is a very spirited figure of Lord Cadogan, on horseback, his hat held off at arm's length, receiving orders from the Duke. His eagerness, proud submission, and impatience to be gone, while he bends to listen, and can scarcely

rein his impatient charger, are all conspicuous. His faithful dog, that would be near him in every battle, and that returned safe home at last, is waiting beside him."

In June 1805, Mrs. Radcliffe went to see Belvedere House, the seat of Lord Eardley. The following is an extract from her account of that mansion.

"The park entrance from Lexden Heath is through a low, iron gate, beyond which is seen the gravel road, winding like a path, among the turf, under the stately branches of clumps of oak, &c. Neither the house, nor any good prospect is visible here; but, as you advance along the elegant plain of the park, a blue distance of the Essex hills appears beneath the low-spread branches of oaks, where there is a seat; on the right, the Grecian portico of the house, among the deep shades, which exclude all other view. The entrance is to a light, elegant hall, or vestibule, of French grey stucco, as are all the extensive passages of the house, the floors covered with oilcloth, of a small pattern, in shades of blue. On the right, through an ante-room of elegant simplicity, pass to a dining-room; the walls of French-grey; silk-moreen curtains, orange; chocolate-coloured fringe. Over the door, two exquisite views of Venice, by Canaletti; the Alchymist, Teniers, in a corner near the fire; then Rembrandt (by himself), looking out of the picture, with a broad

smile, a coarse but arch countenance; Van Trump, the Dutch Admiral, a bluff countenance, as if the habits of a seaman predominated over those of the officer. After seeing several other very fine pictures here, pass some smaller rooms and elegant passages to the red drawing-room, the finest in the house; hung with crimson damask, bordered with gold; curtains and chairs the same, and a most rich carpet, in crimson and black. A finely stuccoed carved ceiling; a large bow-window looking upon the woods of the park. In a shaded corner, near the chimney, a most exquisite Claude, an evening view, perhaps over the Campagna of Rome. The sight of this picture imparted much of the luxurious repose and satisfaction, which we derive from contemplating the finest scenes of Nature. Here was the poet, as well as the painter, touching the imagination, and making you see more than the picture contained. You saw the real light of the sun, you breathed the air of the country, you felt all the circumstances of a luxurious climate on the most serene and beautiful landscape; and, the mind being thus softened, you almost fancied you heard Italian music on the air —the music of Paisiello; and such, doubtless, were the scenes that inspired him. Passed into smaller rooms, and by the same elegant lobbies, to the summer drawing-room, where the bowed window looks down upon a noble sweep of the Thames, with the well-wooded sloping hills of

Essex in the distance. The noble simplicity of this long bend of the Thames, and of the whole scene, is very striking. The eye passes abruptly, between the hanging woods of two jutting eminences of the park, to the green level below, which forms in front a perfect bow of several miles. The woods near the house are so planted, as to conceal the entrance and exit of the river upon the plains below, leaving nothing of it visible but that line of perfect grace and grandeur which it marks between the two green shores, while the vessels seem to steal upon the scene, appearing and disappearing, on either hand, from behind the woods. The dark verdure of these, the lighter green of the plain beneath, the silver grey of the river that bounds it, the white sails and various shades of the fleeting vessels, ships with clustering top-gallant sails, sloops with the stretching and elegantly swelling sails at their heads and above them, and skiffs, or other boats, with their little sprit-sails, too often bending low:—these, with the hills of Essex bending into bluish distance, form altogether a soothing harmony of tints and objects.—Among other pictures that struck me, (especially the family of Snyders, by Rubens,) was one of Wouvermans, representing the dark gate of a fort, with cavaliers on war-horses, waiting impatiently for admittance, their horses rearing and prancing; upon the high, shadowing walls, shrubs appear against the light sky, and above them is

seen a high embankment, with a cannon pointed downwards, and near it a tree, down which a man is hastily descending, as if he had been overlooking a skirmish on the plains below, (not in view,) whence the party without the gate seem to have made a precipitate retreat. They are, perhaps, waiting till he has reported to the guard at the gate, whether they are friends or enemies. The impatience for admittance of those who think themselves likely to be pursued, the cautious apprehension of those within the fort, and the unseen and doubtful battle, hinted at by the man on the tree, render this a very interesting picture.

"The grand staircase, by which we passed to the room over this, is remarkable for its lightness and elegance. All its light is received from a raised frame of glass, which crowns a most richly stuccoed roof, that forms a broad border only round it. I was much struck with the lightness, proportion, and elegance of this staircased hall, and indeed with the numerous long passages of the house. In the family dining-room the pictures are all portraits. One of the late Lady Eardley, when young, is a profile of most exquisite sweetness.

'Softness and sweetest innocence she wears,
And looks like Nature, in the world's first bloom.'

Strong countenance of a tutor of Lord Eardley. No view, but of the Park, from any of these rooms; nor from the library, opening by pillars from a

kind of ante-room, or vestibule. Before a cone at the upper end, is a most noble mahogany library-table with drawers. Between the windows are semi-circular inlaid tables, with deep drawers for maps; some valuable modern books, but no old ones. The art of giving effect to the finest views, by permitting them to be seen only from the rooms whence they may be observed without interruption and in their perfection, is carried very far here; for, as you advance through the grounds to the house, the eye is confined by the woods; and is suffered only once to catch a glimpse of distance under the spreading shades, sufficient to touch the imagination and excite expectation of a scene, whose grandeur and simplicity, when at length it does appear, fully repays the impatience of curiosity. We did not see the woody grounds extending very far along the brow over the Thames, nor the tower of the Belvedere, nearly at the extremity of them and on their highest point. This must look down suddenly upon a new scene of the river, where it spreads into that broad bay, whose eastern point projects opposite to the broken steeps of Purfleet, and comprehends within its curve Erith, with its ivied church, and the hills around it, varied with woods and villas, and whose western point lies near the foot of this eminence, concealed by the woods. But from a window of this lofty tower I doubt not the eye extends to Gravesend in the east, and probably further. Its south-

ern window must look athwart the back of Shooter's Hill to the Knockholt beeches on the ridge near Seven-oaks; and its northern one over Epping Forest and a great part of Essex. Wherever the wood-walks open, there must be a glimpse of the river, and white sails gliding athwart the vista."

In the autumn of 1807, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe visited Knole House for the second time. The following is a small portion of Mrs. Radcliffe's reminiscences of the house, and especially of its pictures.

"We were astonished at the extent of this mansion, and at its vast collection of portraits. Warwick Castle has the greatest number of Vandyke's pictures; Blenheim of Rubens's; Knole of Holbein's, with many of Vandyke too. The old porter at the first gate had lived about the spot fifty years; was there in the time of the late Duke's grandfather: those were grand times; the late Dukes were very good, but things had got dearer then. When we were going, he desired Mr. R. to write our names in the book, that my lord might have the *pleasure* of seeing who had been there.

* * * * * *

At the upper end of the lofty and noble hall, where the high table stood, is now a very large statue of Demosthenes, robed, with buskined feet and a book or scrowl in his hand; the attitude composed; the countenance expresses nothing of the energy and fire that characterize his eloquence.

It was bought by the late Duke in Italy, for seven hundred pounds. The brown gallery is almost covered with portraits by Holbein, the greatest assemblage of famous persons I ever saw. In the little closet of entrance, the countenance of Giardini, the composer, gives you the idea that he is listening to the long-drawn notes of his own violin. Holbein's Erasmus, in the gallery, must be truth itself: the keen and quick, small eye; the humorous, though serious smile; the thin, finely-pointed, yet bending nose; the thin-drawn lips and chin, are all exquisite. In a picture containing three portraits, that in the middle is of Luther. His bluff, blunt, strong habits of expression; his dauntless and persevering mind; his consciousness of the truth and importance of his cause, and his resolution to maintain it, are well expressed: strength and resolution in the chin. On his right is Melancthon, reasoning, acute, amiable. On his left, Pomeranius; a somewhat sly and monkish countenance. Queen Elizabeth and several of her Court: Salisbury, civil, sagacious and fastidious; effeminate; very fair: Burleigh, with a steady, penetrating, grey eye, high forehead, with black hair; a cast of humour: Leicester, sturdy and crafty.

"Lord Surrey, the poet, young, thin and melancholy. No very fine pictures in what is called Lady Betty Germain's room, which looks delightfully upon the green and stately alleys of the garden.

High state-bed; dingy white plumes crown the bed-posts. In the dressing-room are three Earls of Dorset, and drawings by Titian and Michael Angelo. In another room a state-bed, presented by James the First. In the dressing-room, among many fine pictures, is one of Sir Theodore Mayerne, physician to James the First, and to two of his successors, by Vandyke: he is seated in an arm-chair, and his right hand rests on a human skull; his own head is grey, and he looks at you with a mild and sensible countenance, turned a little towards his left shoulder; the fading look of age, without actual weakness.

"In the great dining-room below, Hoppner's copy of his portrait of Mr. Pitt, a strong, and, I think, not a flattering likeness. Fletcher, intelligent, thoughtful, and tender; brown complexion, acute black eyes. Beaumont, florid, with light blue eyes; of an open, cheerful, handsome countenance. Near the windows is a group of portraits, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, with one of himself, in the midst of these his familiar friends, now all dead. On his right is Doctor Johnson, drawn bareheaded—a severe deduction from the harmonies of any frame: it is nearly a profile; intense thought and anxiety press down the benevolent brow. On the left is Goldsmith, painted in the same style, a strong countenance, but of very different expression; coarse; the eye-brows not bent, like Johnson's, firmly and evenly

over the eyes, but only towards the nose; the other end highly hoisted, as if with caprice; unpleasing countenance; nothing of the goodness of Johnson. Garrick, with a most pleasant and living look, piercing eyes fixed upon you, with perfect ease and kindness, as he leans with both arms on a table; older than the portraits I have seen. Burke, vulgarized by Opie. Betterton, the actor, manly, sensible face. Pope, old, wrinkled, spectre-like. Swift, gentle in comparison with Pope. Otway, heavy, squalid, unhappy; yet tender countenance, but not so squalid as one we formerly saw; full, speaking, black eyes; it seems as if dissolute habits had overcome all his finer feelings, and left him little of mind, except a sense of sorrow. Dryden, in his velvet cap, younger than usual. Addison, mild. Waller, thinner and older than usual, with scarce a spark of his fire left, but still a courtier-like gentleman.

"In a small, domestic parlour, leading into the book-room, is that fine picture of Lord Gowrie and Vandyke, by the latter; the finest portrait I ever saw, except one of Rubens, by himself, at Buckingham House, and another at Warwick, in the cabinet that terminates the long suite of state-rooms.

"In a blue room, a domestic drawing-room, Lord Whitworth, a shrewd and comely man of the world, with spirited and penetrating grey eyes; an expressive but somewhat clouded brow. The

Duchess, in a black velvet riding habit, with a hat and feather, by Opie; a pleasing picture: you do not think of her in this portrait as of the Duchess, which is the object of one in the drawing-room, but as of a happy wife and a good-natured, sensible woman; a little too much care in the attitude.

"In one room a head of Louis the Fourteenth, all flutter and fume.

"The rooms are so numerous and the suites of them so long, that, though I have seen them twice, I could not now find my way through them, and cannot even recollect them all. All the principal rooms look upon the garden, with its lawns and lofty shades. Scarcely a spot of brown earth is visible: so many various tints of green; the trees sometimes bending their branches down to the shrubs and flowers.

"In the Park, abounding with noble beech groves, is one, on the left of the road leading to the house, which, for mass and overtopping pomp, excels even any in Windsor Park, when viewed as you descend from the Park gate, whence shade rises above shade, with amazing and magnificent grandeur. In this mass of wood is one beech, that stretches upwards its grey limbs among the light feathery foliage to a height and with a majesty that is sublime. Over a seat, placed round the bole, it spreads out a light yet umbrageous fan, most graceful and beautiful. With all its grandeur and luxuriance, there is nothing in this beech heavy or

formal; it is airy, though vast and majestic, and suggests an idea at once of the strength and fire of a hero! I should call a beech-tree—and this beech above every other—the hero of the forest, as the oak is called the king."

In the autumn of 1811, Mrs. Radcliffe went again to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. The following extracts bear but a small proportion to her entire journal of this little tour.—"Passed through Bere Forest, on the right, with many seats and woods and spires, around. Almost dusk. An horizon of glowing crimson lay behind the woods on the right, where the sun had set. Delightful to catch the different saffron, crimson, or fiery tints among the purple streaks. All the prospect lay in sullen twilight from Portsdown Hill, and it was quite dark when we reached Portsmouth. Could just discern the high rampart walks, with trees, before we rambled under the deep, fortified gateway of Portsea. Went to the George Inn, a very large handsome house, with many galleries and staircases. Handsome furniture and excellent accommodation, except that you could get nothing when you wanted it. We had fish brought without plates, and then plates without bread. All this owing to a vast throng of company, two hundred vessels or more being detained by winds, besides many ships of war. Nothing but ringing of bells and running about of waiters. If you ask a waiter a question, he begins a civil answer, but

shuts the door before you have heard it all. It was very diverting to hear the different tones and measure of the ringings, particularly about supper time, and the next day about five, when every body happened to be dining at one and the same time, to hear them all ringing together, or in quick succession, in different keys and measure, according to the worn out, or better patience of the ringer. These different keys enabled me to distinguish how often each bell was rung before it was answered; also the increasing impatience of the ringer, till, at the third, or fourth summons, the bell was in a downright passion. There was a mischievous amusement in this, after we had gone through the delay ourselves, and had gotten what we wanted. Such life and bustle is inspiriting, for a little while. Before supper, we had been down to the platform, over the sea. All was indistinct and vast; the comet high, but no moon; calm. Heard the falling of the tide—monotonous, not grand—cannon all around and sentinels; some old seamen.

"Oct. 11.—Cloudy, with silver gleams. In the afternoon, sailed in the packet for Ryde. The wind being contrary, though moderate, we were two hours and a half on our passage; had a delightful sail, festooning among all the fleet at Spithead. A passenger asked 'What brig is that?' as we passed a man-of-war. A midshipman, who leaned over the side, made no answer. 'What brig is that, sir?'—'The Rover.' Every body

admired this vessel. Two ships of 100 guns, one of 74, and many of other degrees of force. It was a grand and glorious sight, this anchored fleet, at various distances on the gleaming waves, some in shadow, others upon long lines of distant light, of coldest silver. Among other passengers were two Missionaries going to Sierra Leone in the brig Minerva, belonging to Mr. Macaulay: the eldest Wilhelm, a German, the younger a Persian; modest, sedate, well-intentioned men; had some knowledge of Greek; one of them was taking his wife with him. The captain of their ship, on board, seemed to be a good sort of German. Another captain of a trading ship was a passenger, Captain Reynolds, going to his ship, the Crescent, bound for the Mediterranean: a plain, steady, grave seaman, of the old stamp; good sense, with a pious tender heart. Said he had carried, or that he was then about to carry, several hundred copies of the New Testament in the modern Greek, to be distributed under the direction of agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Captain ——, a Cornish man, going to his ship, the Commerce. These two captains had met "on strands afar remote," and now, by accident, on board this packet. One of them accosted the other with an apology for some apparent inattention at Malta, where they had last parted—his ship having been "so far to leeward." They talked of parts of Smyrna, Constantinople, and other ports beyond

the Straights, as familiarly as they could of London or Bristol. Mr. W——, a London merchant, having a seat somewhere in the west, a tall thin man, about sixty, with a florid face and white hair; an unassuming well-bred man. The captain of the packet, formerly a pilot, had a keen, steady, dark eye, with a brow low-bent, from attention to distant objects, and a countenance quick and firm, that seemed to say he was master of his business, and proud of it.

"Landed at Ryde, after a fine sail, through a grand and interesting scene.

"Oct. 15.—After a foggy night, a clear and cloudless day, with the warmth of June. At Steephill; saw the skirts of the fog clearing up the steeps of Boniface, like a curtain, and the sea below brightening from misty grey into it's soft blue, and the whole horizon gradually clearing, till all was cheerful warmth and sunshine, about ten o'clock. About twelve, we set off to walk to the Signal-house, on the highest steep of Boniface, not visible near the house, nor indeed till we had gone a long way, being on the eastern side of the down. Followed the steep Newport road, for a mile or two; looked down on the vast sea-line, and on the huge promontories and broken rocks of the Undercliffe. Then, leaving the road, turned into a field on the right, with heathy steeps and downs, that would have been capped with clouds, had there been any. The air keen, and the cli-

mate considerably different from that below. The views astonishing and grand in a high degree. From these ridges we looked down, on one side, over the whole interior of the island: but the sublime view was that to the south; where, as we seemed perched on an extreme point of the world, we looked immediately down on hills and cliffs of various height and form, tumbled in confusion, as if by an earthquake, and stretching into the sea, which spreads its vast circumference beyond, and its various shades of blue. This soft blue, thus spreading below us, was, in general, deeper than that of the cloudless sky; and the sky itself was paler at the horizon than high above, appearing there like the dawn of light, and deepening as the arch ascended. This might be the effect of vapour, drawn up from the sea. Found our way at length over nearly trackless furze and heath, to the Signal-house, which looks down on the steeps of Boniface, and the rocks of Bonchurch, and over to the sweep of Sandown Bay, then all over Brading Harbour and the long coast of Sussex, which, in clear weather, may be seen as far as Beachy Head.

"In returning, we endeavoured to follow a path down the steeps near Bonchurch, and to find some steps, cut in the precipice, by which to descend. The look down upon the shores and sea tremendous—steeps below steeps, to the surge beating and whitening below all. Followed, for some time

without dizziness, till we lost our little track, and saw all around and beneath us scarcely any thing but pathless descents—tremendous. From the fear of coming to some impracticable steep in this wild descent and being unable to find the hewn steps, we re-ascended to the Signal-house, and so returned home. The sea a desert, except that a fine frigate sailed majestically at a distance, and one brig was also in sight.

"How sweet is the cadence of the distant surge! It seemed, as we sat in our inn, as if a faint peal of far-off bells mingled with the sounds on shore, sometimes heard, sometimes lost: the first note of the beginning, and last of the falling peal, seeming always the most distinct. This resounding of the distant surge on a rocky shore might have given Shakspeare his idea when he makes Ferdinand, in the Tempest, hear, amidst the storm, bells ringing his father's dirge; a music which Ariel also commemorates, together with the sea-wave:—

'Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell,
Ding, dong, bell!'

"This chiming of the surge is when the tide is among the rocks, and the wind, blowing from the sea, bears and softens all the different notes of the waves to a distance, in one harmonious cadence; as in a concert, your distance from the orchestra blends the different instruments into a richer and softer harmony."

From several walks in the neighbourhood of Steephill, we select the following:—

"Passed Lord Dysart's beautiful cottage. It stands at some distance from the shore, and has several distinct roofs, well thatched: a large conservatory stands on a winding lawn, with a fine beech grove and a long and richly coloured copse, bending along down, and afterwards along the feet of cliffs below. The crimson berries of the hawthorn gave exquisite tints to this coppice, among the brown and various shades of the autumnal woods, and appeared in abundance every where among the trees and wild shrubs of the whole Undercliffe. The little church of St. Lawrence, perhaps the smallest in England, stands on a knoll, and terminates the cultivated valley; immediately beyond which, we entered upon a scene of extreme wildness, grandeur and solitude. Many of the ruinous precipices of the upper cliffs project in horizontal strata, yet have perpendicular rents. Some of the shattered masses give most clear echoes: we stood before one, which repeated every syllable of several passages from the most sonorous languages, with an exactness of tone that was truly astonishing. It seemed as if a living spirit was in the rock, so near, so loud, and so exact! 'Speak to it, Horatio!' I could have listened to it for hours. How solemn is the voice of cliffs and seas! How great the style of Nature! how expressive! 'Speak to the rock!' and again it gave every word, as if in sport or

imitation, but with truth itself. How long had it slumbered in silence? We returned by the course we had come, the yellow sun lighting up seas and shores with the warmth of May, and the birds singing every where.

"Oct. 19.—Left Steephill. Sailed from Cowes in the Southampton packet, about half-past five; the Naiad frigate lying before the town. What particularly struck me in the passage was, not only the sun actually appearing to set in the sea, but the splendid amber light, left upon that long level perspective of waters, and the vessels upon it at various distances, seeming dark on this side, and marking out its extent to the eye. The grace and majesty of an anchored ship, too, lying with her stern to the eye, though at less distance, is indescribable; showing all her shrouds and yards lessening, like a pyramid, as they rise upon the light. How tranquil and grand the scene lay, beneath the gradually deepening shade! Still the dark shores and stately vessels kept their dignity upon the fading waters. How impressive the silence, and then how according the solemn strain, that died upon the waves from unseen and distant bugles, like a song of peace to the departing day! Another of those measured portions that make up our span of life, was gone; every one who gazed upon this scene, proud or humble, was a step nearer to the grave—yet none seemed conscious of it. The scene itself, great, benevolent, sublime—powerful, yet silent in its power—progressive and

certain in its end, steadfast and full of a sublime repose: the scene itself spoke of its CREATOR."

In this year Mrs. Radcliffe visited Penshurst. From some very extensive notes upon this ancient seat of the Sydneys, we extract the following:—

"As we drew near, the woods began to thin; and an old latticed wooden gate showed one entrance into a park, now in ruins, for the grass is tall, scanty, and intermingled with taller fern. No deer appeared on the rusty lawns, or under the scattered trees, or decaying groves, of this once rich domain. Penshurst lies in a small valley of its own, that hangs upon the ridge of hills which form the southern boundary of the grand valley overlooked from Riverhill. All its heights are hung with its own woods, which shut out every distant prospect from the house, except from the turrets; and even from these, at least from the one I climbed, the view is not extensive; but it is a pleasing scene, with here and there an intermingled spire and ancient mansion. After following for a considerable time the paling of this extensive park, an elderly woman admitted us to it through the chief gate; and the ancient mansion immediately appeared over a rough lawn, surrounded with groves. The house is much in the style of Knole, but more irregular, and not of half the size. It is of brick and rough stone, with now a tower, and now a turret; high lozenge chimneys, an embattled

wall, and, above all, the long peaked roof of the great hall. In the court, over the arched portal, is a row of five shields of the family arms, in stone. The great hall is on the opposite side: it is grand, but gloomy, showing the dark rafters of the roof; the tall, pointed windows below shed but a subdued light on the pavement, which is of brick. The rafters have been blackened by the fires of two centuries, lighted on the centre of the pavement, where the bricks, raised half a foot, form a small octagon, on which, perhaps, Sir Philip Sydney and the knights his companions have often stood round the blazing fagots, piled upon the same iron dogs, of enormous size, that still remain there. I think I see, in glimpses, the strong blaze of the wood flashing on their visages. The armour of Sir Philip himself, with helm (the vizor closed), stands at the back of an obscure gallery, and close beneath a high window, whose small frames admit a blunted, melancholy light. It stands like a spectre in arms, watching over the scene it once inhabited; and is admirably placed to touch the imagination, but not to gratify curiosity, its distance being considerable. A partial light, thrown more strongly on the head, would give it very fine effect. It is best seen from one of the doors, that open from the raised step at the upper end of the hall, where the high table stood.

"The hall being so lofty as to seem shorter than it should be, and than it really is, one of the late

owners, to remedy this defect, had a painted perspective placed at one end—a most unsuitable expedient in so great and simple a scene; but the drawings of knights in armour, larger than life, between the windows, are well done. Several very rudely carved wooden images, now whitened and probably brought from some other part of the house, are placed in front of the gallery, as if looking over the railing.

"Mrs. Perry, the grandmother of the present Mr. Sydney, who changed his name from Shelley, was a niece of Sydney, Earl of Leicester, and coheiress with her sister, Lady Howard, of the Penshurst estates. The old housekeeper, who attended us, lamented much that Mr. Sydney did not now live here, but hoped to see him return. She had been all her life on the spot, and told us what fine times she remembered when *Lady* Perry used to drive to the gate in a coach and six, and come down with such 'a sight of servants.' All the tenants used to come to meet her, and '*we girls*' (the speaker was a grandmother) used to stand all in a row to meet her. Such noble liveries! and then the poor woman shook her head, and bustled about, with emotion. The bells were a ringing all day, and there were such goings on. 'Was she *Lady* Perry?' 'Yes, sir,' rather sharply, as if astonished that we could doubt it. 'Was she a *Lady* by birth?' 'Yes, sir,' more sharply; 'she *was* a Lady indeed.' She led us down a modernized

winding staircase into a small hall in the chief part of the mansion, opening into the garden. We passed a fine Gothic window, that gives light to it, having painted shields of arms; among them Queen Elizabeth's. From the great dining-parlour, a staircase leads past many rooms lined with oak panels, worm-eaten; among them the nursery, which the housekeeper pointed out, with a strong regret of *old times*—not those of Sir Philip Sydney, but of Lady Perry. And there were the children's playthings; there they were all—with some sighs. As I humoured her, she began, in the midst of her regrets, to apologize for her dress, and to lament that she had not had time to appear better. 'Do the stairs near the nursery lead to the top of the turret?'—'I don't know, ma'am, but I'll see.' I followed to the small platform, and looked over the battlements upon the wood and the valley. The view was pleasing, but not impressive, or extensive.

"She led us through the great hall, to see the kitchen; one suitable to such a hall, with a lofty, raftered roof, enormous chimney, and long old tables of oak, not nearly so thick as those in the hall at Coventry. Here the good woman was at the climax of her regrets, and she shook her head and sighed often. 'It is a dismal place now, and what do I remember it in *Lady* Perry's time! I remember, when all them hooks,' pointing to rows of them that run, at a great height, over the wide

and lofty chimney piece and round the roof, 'were hung with sides of bacon; ay, I ha' seen them all hung with bacon. And here was such a sight of servants running about, some one way, some another.' She then reverted to Lady P.'s coach and six, and the rejoicings that were to take place when she came down, and '*we girls* used to stand all in a row.' In short, one would have thought that nobody had ever lived in this mansion but Lady Perry. As to Sir Philip and the rest of the Sydneys, they were never thought of when she spoke of *old times*—a neglect which at first somewhat embarrassed me, who thought of them and old times as inseparable. She took us into a smaller kitchen, to show us the stoves and the iron plates, on which, in her old times, tea-cakes and crumpets were baked, and related, with pride, that she used to assist in turning them."

In October 1812, Mrs. Radcliffe visited Malvern. The following is her note of her walk to the summit of the hills:—

"Oct. 21, 1812.—Having slept at the Foley Arms hotel, an excellent inn, delightfully situated, we walked out, about eleven, hoping to reach the highest point of the Malvern Hills. By the zig-zag turf-path, we reached the little Well-house, where we came upon the wild turf, and began to ascend the higher steeps of a mountain. The hoary crags, in vast masses, looked out from among the brown and red tints of the autumnal fern, and

from the green earth, but the crags ceased below the summits, which were smooth and still green. Our view here commanded the vast expanse to the eastward, which we had seen from the inn; but we now saw over the broad Breedon hill, which there bounded the horizon in one direction; and many lines were now visible beyond it. This view is great and comprehensive, but not sublime; the elevation reducing the importance of other heights, so that no single object remains sufficiently striking, either in form or character, to arrest attention, and break the uniform harmony of that rich and woody scene, the vale of the Severn, whose waters were visible only here and there, in little glimmering threads of light. At the summit, we could just discern them near Bristol, rolling in greater breadth. From the Well-house, we soon reached a good winding path, cut in the turf, which led us round one mountain, overlooking other craggy or green steeps of Malvern, till we caught a first glimpse of Herefordshire and of the hills of South Wales, over the ridge, to the west. They were more distant, and less broken and individual, than I had hoped, but grand notwithstanding. Having, at length, turned into a sort of intrenchment, which runs up to the summit, and divides Worcestershire and Herefordshire, we walked in this securely, and with some little shelter from the winds, till we reached the highest point of Malvern, and beheld a vast horizon circling at our

feet. Thirteen counties are said to be visible from this summit, which overlooks the other heights of Malvern. It is indeed a defect in the scene, that there are no other supereminent heights, except those which are too distant to have a fully impressive effect. Even Breedon-hill, that broad feature in the vale of the Severn, was here too much lowered. Towns and villages were often distinguishable chiefly by the wreaths of smoke that spread from them along the vale, but sometimes by the broad tower of a church. On a more intent view, white mansions and woody parks would frequently appear; and rich meadows, hedge-rows and groves, filled the vale, ascended to the hills of other counties, and often spread over their summits too. Few of the mountains of South Wales were sharp, or very bold, at this distance. On this side of them, the square mass of the tower of Hereford Cathedral was perceivable; and, far more southward, the high, level downs of Clifton. Bristol itself is sometimes seen hence. The broad Gloucester hills—the Cotswolds—and the city of Gloucester, with its noble cathedral, are in the nearer vale. From this spot, we could distinguish, merely by turning round, three great cities, with their cathedrals—Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford, to say nothing of the fine abbey-church of Tewksbury. The tower of Malvern church, once a priory-church, is also a venerable feature in the scene. One of the most striking circumstances

was the vast sweep of shadows and lights thrown from the clouds over this great prospect. The mottled expanse of moving lights over the surface of the wide vale sometimes resembled the billows of a sea, on which you look down from some lofty cliff. The lights brought out the villages and mansions on the knolls of Herefordshire surprisingly; and many are most charmingly seated."

Mrs. Radcliffe was particularly interested by Kenilworth Castle, and spent much time in exploring its history after she had visited its ruins. The subject struck her imagination; and in the winter of 1802, she wrote the tale of Gaston de Blondeville, now for the first time given to the world. After this, she undertook no work of magnitude, but occasionaly employed her leisure in composing poems, from which a selection has been made for these volumes. In Romance, she probably felt that she had done enough; and, feeling it impossible to surpass her "Mysteries of Udolpho" and her "Italian," declined again to subject herself to criticism by publication. Though gratified by a sense of the enjoyment she had provided for multitudes, and justly proud of the honest and blameless means by which it was produced, she rarely alluded to her novels. At first, the sums she received, though not necessary, were welcome; but, as her pecuniary resources became more ample, she was without sufficient excitement to begin on an extended

romance, though, had the first effort been made, the pursuit must have been delightful. Even Gaston de Blondeville was not intended for the press, and, having amused herself and her husband, was laid aside, so disinclined had she become to publication.

It is curious that several years after this tale was written, Mrs. Radcliffe, having forgotten many of the incidents, perused it with nearly the same interest as if it had been the production of a stranger. It was again laid aside; and in the latter part of life she repeated the experiment, but it did not absorb her attention as before, the former perusal having stamped the contents on her memory.

Secluded as Mrs. Radcliffe was from the world, she was tremblingly alive to every circumstance which could, by the remotest possibility, raise an inference injurious to the personal character she valued far above literary fame; and, as nothing could induce her to appear before the public in any sort of contention, every thing of this nature preyed long upon her mind. She was much affected by a passage of Miss Seward's correspondence, which seemed, to her apprehensive feelings, to convey an imputation that she had allowed the dramas afterwards avowed by Miss Baillie to be attributed to her pen. Miss Seward in one of her letters dated May 21, 1799, after mentioning the plays, gave the following quotation from a letter of "her literary friend and correspondent Mrs. Jackson"— "Before their author was known, I observed so

much of the power and defects of Mrs. Radcliffe's compositions in these dramas, as to believe them her's, and I hear she owns them. Mrs. Radcliffe, in whatever she writes, attentive solely to the end, is not sufficiently attentive to observe probability in the means she uses to attain it. She bends her plan—or, if it will not bend, she breaks it, to her catastrophe, by making it grow out of the preceding events. Still she always takes hold of the reader's feelings, and effects her purpose boldly if not regularly. Her descriptive talent, used to satiety in her novels, is here employed with more temperance, and consequently to better purpose."

The imputation thus conveyed was, perhaps, implicitly removed by two letters of a few months later date; in one of which Miss Seward, speaking of the Plays on the Passions, says, "My literary friends now assert that they are not Mrs. Radcliffe's;" and in the other, "The literary world now asserts, that the Plays on the Passions are not Mrs. Radcliffe's;" for, if Mrs. Radcliffe had really owned them, it is scarcely probable the literary world could so soon have discredited her acknowledgment, while the real author remained unknown. This implied vindication from a charge, which perhaps no one ever regarded, was not sufficient for Mrs. Radcliffe's delicate sense of propriety and honour. She made inquiries after Mrs. Jackson, the lady mentioned as Miss Seward's

informant, in order that she might trace out the origin of her rumour. Having learned that Mrs. Jackson, after residing at Bath, had removed to Edinburgh, she requested Mr. Davies, of the firm of Cadell and Davies, who had ample opportunities of procuring information respecting the literary society of Edinburgh, to ascertain if Mrs. Jackson was still in that city. In the result of these inquiries it appeared, that the lady, to whom the report was ascribed, had left Edinburgh; that her residence was unknown; and that she was not even supposed to be living. Under these circumstances, Mrs. Radcliffe was obliged to leave her vindication (as, in truth, she safely might) to the tenor of her whole literary course; for no one ever felt, or expressed, more repugnance to factitious praise, or more strenuously declined to avail herself of the warmth of private regard in softening the rigour of criticism. The prayer of the poet, "O grant an honest fame, or grant me none!" was the language of all her actions. She even took pains to prevent some, who, she knew, were desirous of expressing their sense of her genius, from writing eulogies on her works, as she could not endure the conscious degradation of being exalted even by the genial quackery of friendship. It is scarcely necessary now to assert, that the supposition of her having laid claim to the authorship of the Plays on the Passions, or voluntarily endured the ascription of those powerful compositions to her pen,

was utterly groundless. Rich as these works are in passion, and richer in fancy, they could not tempt the author of the Mysteries of Udolpho, even if she had not been restrained by any higher feeling than pride, to claim them—not because they would have been unworthy of her, if she had written them, but because the secret sense of merited reputation must alone have created a distaste for eulogies which she did not deserve. Anxious as Mrs. Radcliffe was to repel the suggestion, she felt that, as she could not discover its author, it would not become her to intrude on Miss Baillie a denial of the report, which she had not sanctioned; and the same susceptible delicacy, which made her feel it so deeply, compelled her to bear it in silence. The subject, which was always painful to her, is rather now alluded to as an instance of the singular apprehensiveness of her moral sense, than as at all required for the vindication of her character.

Another circumstance, of a more trivial nature, gave her uneasiness, though in a less degree. In one of the published letters of the late Mrs. Carter, was a passage of a eulogistic nature, alluding to her works; and to this a note was appended by the editor, showing that "Mrs. Carter had no personal acquaintance with Mrs. Radcliffe." This statement was literally true; but to her sensitive nature it seemed to bear the construction, that the excellent lady referred to would have avoided her

acquaintance. The fact, indeed, was exactly the reverse; for, in the spring of 1799, Mrs. Carter sent to Mrs. Radcliffe a letter of introduction from a lady of high respectability at Bath, and proposed by note to wait on her on the following day; but Mrs. Radcliffe, being engaged to leave town in the morning with her husband, whose health required country air, was obliged respectfully to decline the intended honour. The correspondence appeared in the Annual Biography for 1824, with a short Memoir of Mrs. Radcliffe; and produced from Dr. Pennington, the writer of the note, a most handsome letter, in which he earnestly disclaimed even the slightest idea of disrespect to Mrs. Radcliffe, stating that he was not aware of the little correspondence, or he would have mentioned it with pleasure. Dr. Pennington also avows, not merely with candour, but cordially, the admiration and personal respect, with which Mrs. Carter thought and spoke of Mrs. Radcliffe.

With more reason, Mrs. Radcliffe was amazed at an absurd report, that, haunted by the images of fear, with which she had thrilled her readers, she had sunk into a state of mental alienation. A more unphilosophical foundation for an untruth was never imagined; for it is obvious, that through all her works she holds entire mastery over the terrors which she employs, and even sedulously prepares the means of explaining them by natural causes. It seems, however, that the authoress of

a Tour through England, in noticing the Duke of Rutland's venerable and romantic seat, called Haddon House, asserted that it was there that Mrs. Radcliffe acquired her taste for castles and ancient buildings, and proceeded to lament that she had, for many years, fallen into a state of insanity, and was under confinement in Derbyshire:—the fact being, not only that the main assertion was false, but that all its accompaniments were destitute of foundation;—for Mrs. Radcliffe was only in Derbyshire on two occasions, for a few days each, after her marriage, and never saw Haddon House at all. This report, the falsehood of which might have been ascertained by the authoress, on a reference to her own publisher, was copied in a larger work of more recent date; and to complete the fiction, a plate and description of Haddon House, as the scene of Mrs. Radcliffe's early impressions, were annexed by way of illustration. It also supplied materials for poetry; as in an "Ode to Terror," with other effusions, published by a clergyman in 1810, Mrs. Radcliffe is bemoaned, as having died in that species of mental derangement called "the horrors." Some of these rumours reached her; but she could not endure the thought of writing in the newspapers that she was not insane; and, at last, learned to smile at the pity of those, who thought her in confinement, and the charity of others, who had kindly permitted her to find a release in death from her supposed intellectual sufferings.

While the fate of the authoress of Udolpho was thus considered by the world as sealed, she was enjoying her wonted recreations and studies, with entire relish. As, however, curiosity was satiated with exploring all the finest country within 100 miles of London, and she became more attached to the comforts of home, she contracted the sphere of her excursions. Instead of making journeys of length, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe hired a carriage for the summer months, in which they were accustomed to make frequent trips to beautiful spots in the neighbourhood of London, where they dined and spent the day at some good inn, and returned in the evening. Esher, Stanmore, Richmond, Southgate, and Harrow, were their favourite places of resort, especially the latter, where they chose the room, not the largest, but which commands the richest prospect, and where Crawley Wood, near Ashridge, could be often distinctly seen. Mrs. Radcliffe also was much attached to St. Alban's, the antiquities of which she explored with unwearied zeal, and the historical dignity of which she has vindicated in her longest poem. From 1812 to 1815 inclusive, she passed much time at Windsor and its neighbourhood, and formed an intimate acquaintance with all the recesses of its forest.

> "She knew each lane, and every alley green,
> Dingle or bushy dell of those old woods,
> And every bosky bower from side to side."

She often vividly described the beautiful spots

of this regal domain. There was scarcely a tree of importance, with the peculiar form of which she was not familiar, and the varieties of whose aspect in light and shade she could not picture in words. With reference to their age and to the analogy she fancied to the lines of monarchs, with which they might be coeval, she described the trees separately as Plantagenet oaks, Tudor beeches, or Stuart elms. At this time, she expressed her feelings in verse, rather than in prose, and the reader will find them chronicled in several of her poems. One night-scene on the terrace, however, deserves to be inserted; and may be compared with the descriptions of castellated heights, which abound in her novels.

"We stood in the shade on the north terrace, where a platform projects over the precipice, and beheld a picture perfect in its kind. The massy tower at the end of the east terrace stood up high in shade; but immediately from behind it the moonlight spread, and showed the flat line of wall at the end of that terrace, with the figure of a sentinel moving against the light, as well as a profile of the dark precipice below. Beyond it, was the park and a vast distance, in the faint light, which spread over the turf, touched the avenues, and gave fine contrast to the deep shades of the wooded precipice, on which we stood, and to the whole line of buildings, which rise on the north terrace. Above this high dark line the stars appeared with a very sublime effect. No sound but

the faint clinking of the soldier's accoutrements, as he paced on watch, and the remote voices of people turning the end of the east terrace, appearing for a moment in the light there and vanishing. In a high window of the tower a light. Why is it so sublime to stand at the foot of a dark tower, and look up its height to the sky and the stars?

"What particularly strikes at Windsor is the length of terrace in the east, thus seen by moonlight; the massy towers, four in perspective; the lights and shades of the park below, the obscure distance beyond them, the low and wide horizon, which you seem to look upon, the grandeur of the heavenly arch, which appears to spring from it, and the multitude of stars, which are visible in so vast and uninterrupted a view. Then the north terrace stretching and finally turning away from them towards the west, where high dark towers crown it. It was on this terrace, surely, that Shakspeare received the first hint of the time for the appearance of his ghost.—

> 'Last night of all,
> When yon same star that westward from the Pole
> Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
> Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
> The bell then beating one———'"

From inclination, Mrs. Radcliffe was minutely attentive to her household affairs, probably thinking with Schiller, that, after all, one of the best enjoyments of life arises from the exact perform-

ance of some mechanical duty. Although by no means disposed to parsimony, she kept an exact account of daily disbursements, until a very short time before her death. Much of her leisure was spent in reading the literary productions of the day, especially poetry and novels. Of the latter works she always spoke with an entire freedom from jealousy, and devoured the earlier Scotch novels with all the avidity of youth, although she felt deeply a slighting expression in "Waverley," towards herself, which the author might have spared. Sir Walter Scott has, however, made ample amends to her reputation by his elaborate criticism prefixed to Ballantine's edition of her romances. To music she was passionately attached, and sang herself with exquisite taste, though her voice, remarkably sweet, was limited in compass. At the Opera she was a frequent visitor, and on her return home would sit up singing over the airs she had heard, which her quickness of ear enabled her to catch, till a late hour. She was peculiarly affected by sacred music, and occasionally went to the oratorios, when they afforded her the opportunity of listening to the compositions of Handel. She sometimes, though more rarely, accompanied Mr. Radcliffe to the theatres; and was a warm admirer of Mrs. Siddons, whom she recollected at Bath, when herself was young. She used to speak with much pleasure of having seen this great actress, before the commencement of her splendid

career in London, going to Church with her little son Henry, and was struck by her exceeding dignity and grace. When she visited the theatre, Mrs. Radcliffe generally sat in the pit, partly because her health required warm clothing, and partly because, in that situation, she felt more withdrawn from the observation she disliked. She was fond of listening to any good verbal sounds, and would often desire to hear passages from the Latin and Greek classics, requiring at intervals the most literal translations, that could be given, however much the version might lose in elegance by the exactness.

During the last twelve years of her life, Mrs. Radcliffe suffered at intervals from a spasmodic asthma, which occasioned a general loss of health, and called for the unwearied attentions of her affectionate husband. In the hope of obtaining relief, she visited Ramsgate in the autumn of 1822, and, deriving benefit from the air, recurred to her old habit of noting down her impressions of scenery. The following is the last she ever wrote.

"Ramsgate, Saturday morning, Oct. 19, 1822. —Stormy day, rain without sun, except that early a narrow line of palest silver fell on the horizon, showing, here and there, distant vessels on their course. Ships riding in the Downs, exactly on the sea-line, over the entrance into the harbour, opposite to our windows, were but dim and almost shape-

less hints of what they were. Many vessels, with sails set, making for the port; pilot-boats rowed out of the harbour to meet them; the tide rolling in, leaving the foaming waves at its entrance, where vessels of all kinds, from ships to fishing-boats, appeared in succession, at short intervals, dashing down among the foam, and rushing into the harbour. The little black boats around them often sunk so low in the surge, as to be invisible for a moment. This expansive harbour, encircled by the noble piers, might be considered as a grand theatre, of which the entrance and the sea beyond were the stage, the two pier-heads the portals, the plain of the harbour the pit, and the houses at the end of it the front boxes. This harbour was not now, as some hours since, flooded with a silver light, but grey and dull, in quiet contrast with the foaming waves at its entrance. The horizon thickened, and the scene around seemed to close in; but the vessels, as they approached, though darker, became more visible and distinct, the sails half-set, some nearly whole set. They all kept away a little to the westward of the west pier, the wind south-west, then changed their course, and dashed round the light-house pier-head, tossing the foam high about them, some pitching head foremost, as if going to the bottom, and then rolling helplessly, and reeling in, settled in still waters. A lofty tide."

Although the health of Mrs. Radcliffe was im-

proved by this excursion, she was much affected by the severe cold in the beginning of the ensuing winter. On the ninth of January, 1823, another attack of her disease commenced, which ultimately proved fatal. At first it appeared less serious than some of her previous seizures; but it soon became alarming. On the eleventh of January, Dr. Scudamore, to whose care she had formerly been indebted, was called in, and did every thing for her that skill and tenderness could suggest; but in vain. A few days before her death, an account, which she had accidentally read, of a shocking murder recently perpetrated, pressed on her memory, and joined with the natural operation of the disease to produce a temporary delirium. From this, however, she completely recovered, and remained sensible to the last. On the sixth of February, she did not appear to be in any immediate danger, though in a state of great weakness. At twelve at night, Mr. Radcliffe assisted in giving her some refreshment, which she took with apparent satisfaction, her last words being, "There is some substance in that." She then fell into a slumber; but, when Mr. Radcliffe, who had been sitting up in the next room, re-entered her apartment, in the course of an hour or two, she was breathing rather hardly, and neither he nor the nurse was able to awake her. Dr. Scudamore was instantly sent for; but, before his arrival, she tranquilly expired, at between two and three o'clock in the morning of the

seventh of February, 1823, being in the 59th year of her age. Her countenance after death was delightfully placid, and continued so for some days. Her remains were interred in a vault in the Chapel of Ease, at Bayswater, belonging to St. George's, Hanover Square.

As, since Mrs. Radcliffe's death, the story of her mental alienation has been revived, in reference to her later days, it has been deemed right to apply to Dr. Scudamore for an authentic statement, which he has kindly given, and which must set such idle reports entirely at rest. It is as follows:

"Mrs. Radcliffe had been for several years subject to severe catarrhal coughs, and also was occasionally afflicted with asthma.

"In March 1822, she was ill with inflammation of the lungs, and for a considerable time remained much indisposed. With the summer season and change of air, she regained a tolerable state of health.

"In the early part of January 1823, in consequence of exposure to cold, she was again attacked with inflammation of the lungs, and much more severely than before. Active treatment was immediately adopted, but without the desired relief; and the symptoms soon assumed a most dangerous character. At the end of three weeks, however, and contrary to all expectation, the inflammation of the lungs was overcome; and the amendment

was so decided, as to present a slight prospect of recovery.

"Alas! our hopes were soon disappointed. Suddenly, in the very moment of seeming calm from the previous violence of disease, a new inflammation seized the membranes of the brain. The enfeebled frame could not resist this fresh assault: so rapid in their course were the violent symptoms, that medical treatment proved wholly unavailing.

"In the space of three days, death closed the melancholy scene.

"In this manner, at the age of fifty-nine, society was deprived of a most amiable and valuable member, and literature of one of its brightest ornaments.

"The foregoing statement will, I hope, afford all the explanation, which can be required, of the nature of Mrs. Radcliffe's illness. During the whole continuance of the inflammation of the lungs, the mind was perfect in its reasoning powers, and became disturbed only on the last two or three days, as a natural consequence of the inflammation affecting the membranes of the brain.

"Previously to the last illness, and at all times, Mrs. Radcliffe enjoyed a remarkably cheerful state of mind; and no one was farther removed from "mental desolation," as has been so improperly described of the latter part of her life.

"She possessed a quick sensibility, as the necessary ally of her fine genius; but this quality would

serve to increase the warmth of the social feelings, and effectually prevent the insulation of the mind, either as regards the temper or the understanding."

Mrs. Radcliffe was, in her youth, exquisitely proportioned, though she resembled her father, and his brother and sister, in being low of stature. Her complexion was beautiful, as was her whole countenance, especially her eyes, eyebrows, and mouth. She was educated in the principles of the Church of England; and through life, unless prevented by serious indisposition, regularly attended its services. Her piety, though cheerful, was deep and sincere. Although perfectly well bred, and endowed with faculties and tastes which rendered her a delightful companion, she wanted that confidence which is necessary to mixed society, and which she could scarcely acquire, without losing something of the delicacy of feeling, which marked her character. If, in her retirement, she was sometimes affected by circumstances which would have passed unheeded amidst the bustle of the world, she was more than repaid by the enjoyments, which were fostered in the shade; and perhaps few distinguished authors have passed a life so blameless and so happy.

Mrs. Radcliffe may fairly be considered as the inventor of a new style of romance; equally distinct from the old tales of chivalry and magic, and from modern representations of credible incidents

and living manners. Her works partially exhibit the charms of each species of composition; interweaving the miraculous with the probable, in consistent narrative, and breathing of tenderness and beauty peculiarly her own. The poetical marvels of the first fill the imagination, but take no hold on the sympathies, to which they have become alien: the vicissitudes of the last awaken our curiosity, without transporting us beyond the sphere of ordinary life. But it was reserved for Mrs. Radcliffe to infuse the wondrous in the credible; to animate rich description with stirring adventure; and to impart a portion of human interest to the progress of romantic fiction. She occupied that middle region between the mighty dreams of the heroic ages and the realities of our own, which remained to be possessed; filled it with goodly imagery; and made it resonant with awful voices. Her works, in order to produce their greatest impression, should be read first, not in childhood, for which they are too substantial; nor at mature age, for which they may seem too visionary; but at that delightful period of youth, when the soft twilight of the imagination harmonizes with the luxurious and uncertain light cast on their wonders. By those, who come at such an age to their perusal, they will never be forgotten.

The principal means, which Mrs. Radcliffe employed to raise up her enchantments on the borders of truth, are, first, her faculty of awakening

emotions allied to superstitious fear; and, secondly, her skill in selecting and describing scenes and figures precisely adapted to the feelings she sought to enkindle. We will examine each of these powers, and then shortly advert to their developement in her successive romances.

I. The art, by which supernatural agency is insinuated, derives its potency from its singular application to human nature, in its extremes of weakness and strength. Simply considered, fear is the basest of emotions, and the least adapted to the dignity of romance; yet it is that, of which the most heroic heart sometimes whispers a confession. On the other hand, every-thing, which tends to elevate and ennoble our feelings, to give the character of permanency to our impressions, and impart a tongue to the silence of nature, has reference to things unseen. The tremblings of the spirit, which are base when prompted by any thing earthly, become sublime when inspired by a sense of the visionary and immortal. They are the secret witnesses of our alliance with power, which is not of this world. We feel both our fleshly infirmity and our high destiny, as we shrink on the borders of spiritual existence. Whilst we listen for echoes from beyond the grave, and search with tremulous eagerness for indications of the unearthly, our Curiosity and Fear assume the grandeur of passions. We might well doubt our own immortality, if we felt no restless desire to forestal the

knowledge of its great secret, and held no obstinate questionings with the sepulchre. We were not of heavenly origin, if we did not struggle after a communion with the invisible; nor of human flesh, if we did not shudder at our own daring;—and it is in the union of this just audacity and venial terror, that we are strangely awed and affected. It is, therefore, needless to justify the use of the supernatural in fiction; for it is peculiarly adapted to the workings of the imagination—that power, whose high province is to mediate between the world without us and the world within us; on the one hand to impart sentiment and passion to the external universe, and make it redolent of noble associations; and, on the other, to clothe the affections of the heart and the high suggestions of the reason with colour and shape, and present them to the mind in living and substantial forms.

There are various modes, in which the supernatural may be employed, requiring more or less of a dextrous sympathy, in proportion to the depth and seriousness of the feeling, which the author proposes to awaken. In cases where the appeal is only made to the fancy, it is sufficient if the pictures are consistent with themselves, without any reference to the prejudices, or passions, of those, before whom they are presented. To this class the fables of the Greek mythology belong, notwithstanding their infinite varieties of grandeur and beauty. They are too bright and palpable to produce emotions of

awe, even among those, who professed to believe them; and rather tended to inclose the sphere of mortal vision, which they adorned and gladdened, with more definite boundaries, than to intimate the obscure and eternal. Instead of wearing, then, the solemn aspect of antiquity, they seem, even now, touched with the bloom of an imperishable youth. The gorgeous Oriental fictions and modern tales of fairy lore are also merely fantastical, and advance no claim on faith, or feeling. Their authors escape from the laws of matter, without deriving any power from the functions of spirit; they are rather without than above nature, and seek only an excuse in the name of the supernatural for their graceful vagaries. Akin essentially to these are mere tales of terror, in which horrors are accumulated on horrors. Beyond the precincts of the nursery, they are nothing but a succession of scenic representations—a finely coloured phantasmagoria, which may strike the fancy, but do not chill the blood, and soon weary the spectator. It is only the "eye of childhood" which "fears a painted devil." In some of the wild German tales, indeed, there is, occasionally a forcible exaggeration of truth, which strikes for a moment, and seems to give back the memory of a forgotten dream. But none of these works, whatever poetical merit they may possess, have the power to fascinate and appal, by touching those secret strings of mortal apprehension, which connect our earthly with our spiritual being.

In these later days, it, no doubt, requires a fine knowledge of the human heart to employ the supernatural, so as to move the pulses of terror. Of all superstitions, the most touching are those, which relate to the appearance of the dead among the living; not only on account of the reality which they derive from mingling with the ordinary business of life, but of the cold and shuddering sympathy we feel for a being like to whom we may ourselves become in a few short years. To bring such a vision palpably on the scene is always a bold experiment, and usually requires a long note of preparation, and a train of circumstances, which may gradually and insensibly dispose the mind to implicit credence. Yet to dispense with all such appliances, and to call forth the grandest spirit, that ever glided from the tomb, was not beyond Shakspeare's skill. A few short sentences only prepare the way for the ghost of the murdered King of Denmark; the spirit enters, and we feel at once he is no creature of time; he speaks, and his language is "of Tartarus, and the souls in bale." Such mighty magic as this, however, belonged only to the first of poets. Writers who, in modern times, have succeeded in infusing into the mind thoughts of unearthly fear, have usually taken one of these two courses: either they have associated their superstitions with the solemnities of nature, and contrived to interweave them in the very texture of life, without making themselves re-

sponsible for the feelings they excite: or they have, by mysterious hints and skilful contrivances, excited the curiosity and terror of their readers, till they have prepared them either to believe in any wonder they may produce, or to image for themselves in the obscurity fearful shapes, and to feel the presence of invisible horrors.

Those, who seek to create a species of supernatural interest by the first of these processes, find abundant materials adapted to their use in the noblest parts of our own intellectual history. There are doubtful phenomena within the experience of all reflecting minds, which may scarcely be referred to their mere mortal nature, and which sometimes force on the coldest sceptic a conviction, that he is "fearfully" as well as "wonderfully made." Golden dreams hover over our cradle, and shadows thicken round the natural descent of the aged into the grave. Few there are, who, in childhood, have not experienced some strange visitings of serious thought, gently agitating the soul like the wind "that bloweth where it listeth," suggesting to it holy fancies, and awakening its first sympathy with a world of sorrow and of tears. Who has not felt, or believed that he has felt, a sure presentiment of approaching evil? Who, at some trivial occurrence, "striking the electric chord by which we are darkly bound," has not been startled by the sudden revival of old images and feelings, long buried in

the depth of years, which stalk before him like the spectres of departed companions? Who has not shrunk from the fascination of guilty thoughts, as from "supernatural soliciting?" Where is the man so basely moulded, that he does not remember moments of inspiration, when statelier images than his common intellect can embody, hopes and assurances brighter than his constitutional temperament, may recal, and higher faculties within himself than he has ever been able to use, have stood revealed to him like mountain-tops at the utmost reach of vision, touched by a gleam of the morning sun? And who, in the melancholy calm of the mind, sadly looking into its depths, has not perceived the gigantic wrecks of a nobler nature, as the fortunate voyager on some crystal lake has discerned, or fancied he discerned, the wave-worn towers of a forgotten city far in the deep waters? There are magic threads in the web of life, which a writer of romance has only to bring out and to touch with appropriate hues of fancy. From the secret places of the soul are voices more solemn than from old superstitions, to which he may bid us hearken. In his works, prophecies may be fulfilled; presentiments justified; the history of manhood may answer to the dreams of the nursery; and he may leave his readers to assert if they can, "These have their causes; they are natural." Let him only give due effect to the problem, and he may safely trust their hearts to supply the answer!

The other mode of exciting terror requires, perhaps, greater delicacy and skill, as the author purposes to influence the mind directly from without, instead of leaving it, after receiving a certain clue, to its own workings. In this style, up to the point where Mrs. Radcliffe chooses to pause and explain, she has no rival. She knows the string of feeling she must touch, and exactly proportions her means to her design. She invariably succeeds not by the quantity but the quality of her terrors. Instead of exhibiting a succession of magnificent glooms, which only darken the imagination, she whispers some mysterious suggestion to the soul, and exhibits only just enough of her picture to prolong the throbbings she has excited. In nothing is her supremacy so clearly shown, as in the wise and daring economy, with which she has employed the instruments of fear. A low groan issuing from distant vaults; a voice heard among an assembly from an unknown speaker; a little track of blood seen by the uncertain light of a lamp on a castle staircase; a wild strain of music floating over moonlight woods; as introduced by her, affect the mind more deeply than terrible incantations, or accumulated butcheries. "Pluck out the heart of her mystery!"—tell, at once, the secret, the lightest hint of which appals—verify the worst apprehensions of the reader; and what would be the reality in common hands? You can suspect nothing more than a cruel murder perpe-

trated many years ago by an unprincipled monk, or an avowed robber! Why should we suffer all the stings of curiosity on such an issue? Human life is not held so precious, murder is not so strange and rare an occurrence, that we should be greatly agitated by the question whether, two centuries ago, a bandit destroyed one of his captives; but the skill of the writer, applying itself justly to the pulses of terror in our intellectual being, gives tragic interest to the inquiry, makes the rusted dagger terrible, and the spot of blood sublime. This faculty is the more remarkable, as it is employed to raise a single crime into importance; while others of equal dye are casually alluded to, and dismissed, as deeds of little note, and make no impression on the reader. Assassins who murder for hire, commonly excite no feeling in romance, except as mere instruments, like the weapons they use; but, when Mrs. Radcliffe chooses to single out one of these from the mass, though undistinguished by peculiar characteristics, she rivets our attention to Spalatro, as by an irresistible spell; forces us to watch every movement of his haggard countenance, and makes the low sound of his stealthy footsteps sink into the soul. Her faculty, therefore, which has been represented as melo-dramatic, is akin to the very essence of tragic power, which is felt not merely in the greatness of the actions, or sorrows, which it exhibits, but in its

nice application to the inmost sources of terror and of pity.

It is extraordinary, that a writer thus gifted should, in all her works intended for publication, studiously resolve the circumstances, by which she has excited superstitious apprehensions, into mere physical causes. She seems to have acted on a notion, that some established canon of romance obliged her to reject real supernatural agency; for it is impossible to believe she would have adopted this harassing expedient if she had felt at liberty to obey the promptings of her own genius. So absolute was her respect for every species of authority, that it is probable she would rather have sacrificed all her productions, than have transgressed any arbitrary law of taste, or criticism. It is equally obvious, that there is no valid ground of objection to the use of the supernatural, in works of fiction, and that it is absolutely essential to the perfection of that kind of romance, which she invented. To the imagination it is not only possible, but congenial, when introduced with art, and employed for high and solemn purposes. Grant only the possibility of its truth, which "the fair and innocent" are half disposed to believe, and there is nothing extravagant in the whole machinery, by which it works. But discard it altogether, and introduce, in its stead, a variety of startling phenomena, which are resolved at last

into petty deceptions and gross improbabilities, and you at once disappoint the fancy, and shock the understanding of the reader. In the first case, the reason is not offended, because it is not consulted; in the last, it is expressly appealed to with the certainty of an unfavourable decision. Besides it is clear that all the feelings created up to the moment of explanation, and which it has been the very object of the author to awaken, have obeyed the influence of these very principles, which at last she chooses to disown. If the minds to whom the work is addressed were so constituted as to reject the idea of supernatural agency, they would be entirely unmoved by the circumstances arranged to produce the impression of its existence; and "The Mysteries of Udolpho" would have fallen still-born from the press! Why then should the author turn traitor to her own "so potent art?" Why, having wrought on the fears of her readers till she sways them at her will, must she turn round and tell them they have been awed and excited by a succession of mockeries? Such impotent conclusions injure the romances as works of art, and jar on the nerves of the reader, which are tuned for grand wonders, not paltry discoveries. This very error, however, which injures the effect of Mrs. Radcliffe's works, especially on a second perusal, sets off, in the strongest light, the wizard power of her genius. Even when she has dissolved mystery after mystery, and abjured spell

after spell, the impression survives, and the reader is still eager to attend again, and be again deluded. After the voices heard in the chambers of Udolpho have been shown to be the wanton trick of a prisoner, we still revert to the remaining prodigies with anxious curiosity, and are prepared to give implicit credence to new wonders at Chateau le Blanc. In the romance of Gaston de Blondeville, Mrs. Radcliffe, not intending to publish, gratified herself by the introduction of a true spectre; and, without anticipating the opinion of the public on that work, we may venture to express a belief, that the manner, in which the supernatural agency is conducted, will deepen the general regret, that she did not employ it in her longer and more elaborate productions.

II. Mrs. Radcliffe's faculties of describing and picturing scenes and appropriate figures was of the highest order. Her accurate observation of inanimate nature, prompted by an intense love of all its varieties, supplied the materials for those richly coloured representations, which her genius presented. Without this perception of the true, the liveliest fancy will only produce a chaos of beautiful images, like the remembered fragments of a gorgeous dream. How singularly capable Mrs. Radcliffe was of painting the external world, in its naked grandeur, her published tour among the English Lakes, and, perhaps still more, the notes made on her journeys for her own amuse-

ment, abundantly prove. In the first, the boldness and simplicity of her strokes, conveying the clear images to the eye of the mind, with scarcely any incrustation of sentiment, or perplexing dazzle of fancy, distinguish her from almost all other descriptive tourists. Still the great charm of simplicity was hardly so complete, as in her unstudied notices of scenery; because in writing for the press, it is scarcely possible to avoid altogether the temptation of high sounding and ambiguous expressions, which always impede the distant presentiment of material forms. To this difficulty, she thus adverts in her account of Ulswater. "It is difficult to spread varied pictures of such scenes before the imagination. A repetition of the same images of rock, wood, and water, and the same epithets of grand, vast, and sublime, which necessarily occur, must appear tautologous, though their archetypes in nature, ever varying in outline or arrangement, exhibit new visions to the eye, and produce new shades of effect on the mind." In the journals, as no idea of authorship interposed to give restraint to her style, there is entire fidelity and truth. She seems the very chronicler and secretary of nature; makes us feel the freshness of the air; and listen to the gentlest sounds. Not only does she keep each scene distinct from all others, however similar in general character; but discriminates its shifting aspects with the most delicate exactness. No aerial tint of a fleecy cloud is too evanescent to be

imaged in her transparent style. Perhaps no writer in prose, or verse, has been so happy in describing the varied effects of light in winged words. It is true, that there is not equal discrimination in the views of natural scenery, which she presents in her romances. In them she writes of places, which she has not visited; and, like a true lover, invests absent nature with imaginary loveliness. She looks at the grandeurs and beauties of creation through a soft and tender medium, in which its graces are heightened, but some of its delicate varieties are lost. Still it is nature that we see, though touched with the hues of romance, and which could only be thus presented by one who had known, and studied its simple charms.

In the estimate of Mrs. Radcliffe's pictorial powers, we must include her persons as well as her scenes. It must be admitted that, with scarcely an exception, they are figures rather than characters. No writer ever produced so powerful an effect, without the aid of sympathy. Her machinery acts directly on her readers, and makes them tremble and weep, not for others, but for themselves. Adeline, Emily, Vivaldi, and Ellena, are nothing to us, except as filling up the scene; but it is we ourselves, who discover the manuscript in the deserted abbey; we, who are prisoners in the castle of Udolpho; we, who are inmates of Spalatro's cottage; we, who stand before the secret tribunal of the Inquisition, and even there are

startled by the mysterious voice deepening its horrors. The whole is prodigious painting, so entire as to surround us with illusion; so cunningly arranged as to harrow up the soul; and the presence of a real person would spoil its completeness. As figures, all the persons are adapted with peculiar skill to the scenes in which they appear;—the more, as they are part of one entire conception. Schedoni is the most individual and fearful; but through all the earlier parts of the romance, he stalks like a being not of this world; and works out his purposes by that which, for the time at least, we feel to be superhuman agency. But when, after glaring out upon us so long as a present demon; or felt, when unseen, as directing the whole by his awful energies; he is brought within the range of human emotion by the discovery of his supposed daughter, and an anxiety for her safety and marriage; the spell is broken. We feel the incongruity; as if a spectre should weep. To develope character was not within the scope of Mrs. Radcliffe's plan, nor compatible with her style. At one touch of human pathos the enchantment would have been dissolved, as spells are broken by a holy word, or as the ghost of Protesilaus vanished before the earthly passion of his enamoured widow.

As the absence of discriminated feeling and character was necessary to the completeness of the effect Mrs. Radcliffe sought to produce, so she was rather assisted by manners peculiarly straight-laced and

timorous. A deep vein of sentiment would have suggested thoughts and emotions inconsistent with that "wise passiveness," in which the mind should listen to the soft murmur of her "most musical, most melancholy" spells. A moral paradox could not co-exist with a haunted tower in the mind of her readers. The exceeding coldness and prudence of her heroines do not abstract them from the scenes of loveliness and terror through which we desire to follow them. If her scrupulous sense of propriety had not restrained her comic powers, Mrs. Radcliffe would probably have displayed considerable talent for the humorous. But her talkative servants are all very guarded in their loquacity; and even Annette, quaintly and pleasantly depicted, fairly belongs to the scene. Her old-fashioned primness of thought, which with her was a part of conscience, with all its cumbrous accompaniments, serves at once to render definite, and to set off, her fanciful creations. Romance, as exhibited by her, "tricked in antique ruff and bonnet," has yet eyes of youth; and the beauty is not diminished by the folds of the brocade, or the stiffness of the damask stomacher.

These remarks apply, in their fullest effect, only to "*The Mysteries of Udolpho*," and "*The Italian*," in which alone the chief peculiarities of Mrs. Radcliffe's genius are decidedly marked. In her first work, "*The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*," it is scarcely possible to discover their germ. Its scene

is laid "in the most romantic part of the Highlands of Scotland," yet it is without local truth or striking picture. It is at once extravagant and cold. Except one scene, where the Earl of Athlin pursues two strangers through the vaults of his castle, and is stabbed by one of them in the darkness, nothing is delineated; but incredible events follow each other in quick succession, without any attempt to realize them. Those, who complain of the minuteness of Mrs. Radcliffe's descriptions, should read this work, where every thing passes with headlong rapidity, and be convinced of their error. In some few instances, perhaps, in "The Mysteries of Udolpho," the descriptions of external scenery may occur too often; but her best style is essentially pictorial; and a slow developement of events was, therefore, necessary to her success.

The "*Sicilian Romance*" is a work of much more "mark and likelihood;" and, very soon after its first appearance, attracted a considerable share of public attention. Here the softer blandishments of our author's style, which were scarcely perceptible in her first production, were spread forth to captivate the fancy. Transported to the "sweet south," her genius, which had shrunk in the bleak atmosphere of Scotland, caught the luxurious spirit of a happier clime. Never was a title more justly applied than to this romance; it reminds the reader of "Sicilian fruitfulness." In tender and luxurious description of natural scenery, it is surpassed by none of Mrs. Radcliffe's productions. The flight

of her heroine is like a strain of "lengthened sweetness long drawn out;"—as one series of delicious valleys opens on us after another; and the purple light of love is shed over all. Still she had not yet acquired a mastery over her own power of presenting terrific incidents and scenes to the eye of the mind, and awakening the throbs of suspense by mysterious suggestions. The light seen through the closed windows of the deserted rooms —the confession of Vincent stopped by death—the groans heard from beneath Ferdinand's prison— and the figure perceived stealing among the vaults, are not introduced with sufficient earnestness, and lose all claim to belief, by the utter incredibility of the incidents, with which they are surrounded. Escapes, recaptions, encounters with fathers and banditti, surprising partings, and more surprising meetings, follow each other as quickly as the changes of a pantomime, and with almost as little of intelligible connexion. One example may suffice.—Hippolitus enters a ruin by moonlight, for shelter; hears a voice as of a person in agony; sees, through a shattered casement, a group of banditti plundering a man, who turns out to be Ferdinand, his intended brother-in-law; finds himself, he knows not how, in a vault; hears a scream from an inner apartment; bursts open the door and discovers a lady fainting, whom he recognizes as his mistress; overhears a quarrel and combat for the lady between two of the banditti, which ends in the death of one of them; fights with the survivor,

and kills him; endeavours to escape with Julia; finds his way into a "dark abyss," which is no other than the burial-place of the victims of the banditti, marked with graves, and strewed with unburied carcases; climbs to a grate, and witnesses a combat between the robbers and officers of justice; escapes with the lady through a secret door into the forest, where they are pursued by her father's party; but, while he fights at the mouth of a cavern, she loses her way in its recesses, till they actually conduct her to the dungeon where her mother, who had been considered dead for fifteen years, is imprisoned;—and all this in a few pages! There are, in this short story, incidents enough for two such works as "The Mysteries of Udolpho," where, as in that great romance, they should not only be told, but painted; and where reality and grandeur should be given to their terrors.

In "*The Romance of the Forest,*" Mrs. Radcliffe, who, since the dawn of her powers, had been as one "moving about in worlds unrealized," first exhibited the faculty of controlling and fixing the wild images which floated around her, and of stamping on them the impress of consistency and truth. This work is, as a whole, the most faultless of all her productions; but it is of an inferior order to "The Mysteries of Udolpho" and "The Italian;" and can only be preferred by those, who think the absence of error of more importance than original

excellence. There is a just proportion between all its parts; its mysteries are adequately explained; it excites and gratifies a very pleasant degree of curiosity; but it does not seem to dilate the imagination, nor does it curdle the blood. Its opening after a sentence of marvellous common-place, is striking; the midnight journey of La Motte and his family they know not whither, and the introduction of the heroine, under extraordinary circumstances, to their care, rivet attention to all that is to follow. The scenes in the forest where they take up their abode are charming. This seems the most delicious asylum for the persecuted outlaw; its wood-walks and glades glisten before us with the morning dew; and there is something in the idea of finding a home in a deserted abbey, which answers to some of the wildest dreams of childhood, and innocently gratifies that partiality for unlicensed pleasure, or repose, which is so natural to the heart. The whole adventure of La Motte and the Marquis is sufficiently probable and interesting; and the influence, which it ultimately enables the more resolute villain to exercise over the weaker, is managed with peculiar skill, and turned to great account in the progress of the story. There is here scarcely any hint of the supernatural; but the skeleton in the chest of the vaulted chamber; the dagger, spotted with rust; the manuscript of the prisoner, which Adeline reads by the fitful light of her lamp, and which proves to be

written by her own father, possess us with the apprehension of some secret crime, which acquires importance from its circumstances and its mystery. There are some highly-finished scenes; as that where Adeline, in her solitary chamber, dares not raise her eyes to her glass, lest another face than her own should meet them; her escape with a man whom she supposes to be the servant she had trusted, and who startles her with a strange voice; the luxurious pavilion of the Marquis, to which we are introduced after a frightful journey through a storm; and, above all, the conversation, in which the Marquis, after a series of dark solicitations, understood by La Motte, as pointing to Adeline's dishonour, proposes her death. This last, as a piece of dramatic effect, is perhaps equal to any passage in the author's works. The closing chapters of the work are inferior in themselves to its commencement; but they gratify by affording a worthy solution of the intricacies of a plot, which has excited so deep an interest in its progress."

"*The Mysteries of Udolpho*" is by far the most popular of Mrs. Radcliffe's works. To this pre-eminence it is, we think, justly entitled; for, although "*The Italian*" may display more purely intellectual power, it is far less enchanting. Of all the romances in the world, this is perhaps the most romantic. Its outline is noble, it is filled with majestic or beautiful imagery; and it is touched throughout with a dreamy softness, which harmonizes all its scenes, and renders its fascination

irresistible. It rises from the gentlest beauty by just gradations to the terrific and the sublime. Nothing can be fancied more soothing to the mind, fevered with the bustle of the world, than the picture of domestic repose, with which it opens. We are dwellers in the home of the good St. Aubert, who has retired to a beautiful spot, once the favourite scene of his youthful excursions; and sharers in its elegant and tranquil pleasures. Next come the exquisite journey of the father and daughter through the heart of the Pyrenees, where we trace out every variety of mountain grandeur; the richly-coloured scene of vintage gaiety among the woods of the chateau; and the death of St. Aubert in the neighbourhood of a place, which we understand to be connected with his destiny, and where strains of unearthly music are heard in sad accordance with human sorrow. When Emily's aunt, to whose care she is consigned, marries the desperate Montoni, we feel that the clouds are gathering round her progress, and we shudder at the forebodings of approaching peril. A little interval is given among the luxuries of Venice, which are painted with exquisite delicacy and lightness; and then the work of terror begins. Nothing can be more picturesque than the ascent of the Apennines; mountain seems to rise above mountain in gloomy stateliness before us, till we skirt the inmost valley, far shut out from the world, and Montoni, breaking a long silence, utters the charmed words, "There

is Udolpho!" The ideas of extent, of massiveness, and austere grandeur, conveyed in the description of the castle, have matchless force and distinctness, and prepare the mind for the crimes and wonders, of which it is the silent witness. Every thing beneath "these dark battlements" is awful; the slightest incidents wear a solemn hue, and "Fate in sullen echoes" seems to "tell of some nameless deed." Not only the mysterious appearances and sounds appal us, but the rushing wind, a rustling curtain, the lonely watch-word on the terrace, have power to startle, and keep curiosity awake. The whole persecution and death of Madame Montoni seem prodigious, as through they were something out of nature; yet they derive all this importance from the circumstances, with which they are invested; for there is nothing extraordinary in the fate of a despicable woman, worried into the grave by her husband, because she will not give up her settlement. The mysteries of Chateau le Blanc are less majestic than those of Udolpho, but perhaps they are even more touching; at least, the visit of Emily to the chamber where the Marchioness died, twenty years before, not without suspicion of poison, and which had been shut up ever since, is most affecting and fearful. The faded magnificence of the vast apartment; the black pall lying on the bed, as when it decked the corpse; the robe and articles of dress remaining as they had been carelessly scattered in the lifetime of their owner; her veil, which hand had

never approached since, now dropping into pieces; her lute on the table, as it was touched on the evening of her death; would be solemn and spectral, even if the pall did not move and a face arise from beneath it. This scene derives a tenderer interest from the strange likeness, which Emily seems to bear to the deceased lady, and which is artfully heightened by the action of the old housekeeper throwing the black veil over her, and by her touching the long-neglected lute. Such are some among the many striking features of this romance; its defects are great and obvious. Its mysteries are not only resolved into natural causes, but are explained by circumstances provokingly trivial. What reader would bear to be told that the black veil, from which his imagination has scarcely been allowed to turn for three volumes, conceals a waxen image; that the wild music, which has chanced to float on the air, in all the awful pauses of action, proceeded from an insane nun, permitted to wander about the woods; and that the words, which startled Montoni and his friends, at their guilty carousals, were uttered by a man wandering through a secret passage almost without motive; unless the power and sweetness of the spell remained after it was thus rudely broken?

"*The Italian*" has more unity of plan than "The Mysteries of Uldopho;" and its pictures are more individual and distinct; but it has far less tenderness and beauty. Its very introduction, unlike the gentle opening of the former romance, im-

presses the reader with awe. Its chief agent, Schedoni, is most vividly painted; and yet the author contrives to invest him with a mystery, which leads us to believe, that even her image is inadequate to the reality. Up to the period, at which he unnaturally melts from demon to man, he is the always chief figure when he is present; and, where we do not see him, his spirit yet seems to influence all around us. The great scenes of this romance stand out in bold relief as in compartments; of which the chief are the adventures in the vaults of Pallozzi; the machinations of Schedoni and the Marchioness, for the destruction of the heroine; her confinement in the monastery of San Stephano, and her escape with Vivaldi; her terrible sojourn in Spalatro's cottage on the sea-shore; and the whole representation of the Inquisition, which fills the mind when Schedoni's supremacy ceases. Of these, perhaps the very finest is the scene in the church, where the Confessor makes palpable to the Marchioness the secret wishes of her heart for Ellena's death: the situation is essentially fearful; and all the circumstances are contrived with admirable effect to heighten, vary and prolong the feeling of curiosity and terror. The dreary horrors of the fisherman's cottage are admirably painted; but the effort to produce a great theatrical effect is very imperfectly concealed; and we cannot help being somewhat dissatisfied with the process of bringing a helpless orphan to such a distance, merely that she may be murdered with

eclat; with the equally unaccountable delay in performing the deed; the strange relentings of the ruffian; and the long preparation, which precedes the attempt of Schedoni to strike the fatal blow. There is great art in the scene, to which all this is introductory; and the discovery of the portrait is a most striking *coup de theatre;* but the art is too palpable, and the contrast between the assassin and the father too violent—at least, for a second perusal. Not so, the graphic description of the vast prisons of the Inquisition; they are dim, prodigious, apparently eternal; and the style is solemn and weighty as the subject. Mrs. Radcliffe alone could have deepened the horror of this gloom by whispers of things yet more terrible; and suggest fears of the unseen, which should overcome the present apprehensions of bodily torture.

Of the tale and the poems now first presented to the world, it would scarcely become us particularly to speak. The verses, scattered through all the romances, are so inartificially introduced, that they have little chance of being estimated by an impatient reader; but, when examined, they will be found replete with felicitous expression and with rich though indistinct imagery.

In her own peculiar style of composition, Mrs. Radcliffe has never been approached. Her success naturally drew forth a crowd of imitators, who produced only cumbrous caricatures, in which the terrors were without decorum, and the explanations absolutely farcical. No successful writer has followed

her without calling to aid other means, which she would not condescend to use. The Author of "The Monk" mingled a sickly voluptuousness with his terrors; and Maturin, full of "rich conceits," approached the borders of the forbidden in speculation, and the paradoxical in morals. She only, of all writers of romance, who have awed and affected the public mind, by hints of things unseen, has employed enchantments purely innocent; has forborne to raise one questionable throb, or call forth a momentary blush. This is the great test not only of moral feeling, but of intellectual power; and in this will be found her highest praise.

The Editor of the present Publication, who is not the Writer of the preceding Memoir, is aware, that it would be unbecoming for him to say more of Works, written by one so dear to him, than may be necessary to give the Public an early assurance of their authenticity; and that fact, he apprehends, will be sufficiently proved by the distribution, which he has resolved to make, of the whole purchase-money of the copy-right. Every part of that produce will be paid, as it shall accrue to him, to some public charitable institution in England. The Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, and Sir Walter Stirling, Bart. in consideration of the utility of this purpose, allow him the honour of saying, that they will audit his account of that distribution.

GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE;

OR THE

COURT OF HENRY THE THIRD

KEEPING FESTIVAL IN ARDEN.

GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE.

INTRODUCTION.

"WELL! now are we in Arden," said an English traveller to his companion, as they passed between Coventry and Warwick, over ground, which his dear Shakspeare had made classic. As he uttered this exclamation of Rosalind, he looked forward with somewhat of the surprise and curiosity, which she may be supposed to have felt, and with an enthusiasm all his own, on beholding the very scene, into which the imagination of the poet had so often transported him with a faint degree

of its own rapture. He was not, it appears, one of those critics, who think that the Arden of Shakspeare, lay in France. But he looked in vain for the thick and gloomy woods, which, in a former age, were the home of the doubtful fugitive, and so much the terror of the traveller, that it had been found necessary, on this very road, to clear the ground, for a breadth of six acres on each side, in order to protect the wayfaring part of his Majesty's liege subjects.

Now, albeit the landscape was still wild and woody, he could not any where espy a forest scene of dignity sufficient to call up before his fancy the exiled duke and his court, at their hunter-feast, beneath the twilight of the boughs; nor a single beech, under the grandeur of whose shade the melancholy Jaques, might "lose and neglect the creeping hours of time," while he sadly sympathized with the poor stag, that, escaped from the pursuit of man, came to

drop his tears into the running brook, and to die in quiet. Not even a grove appeared, through whose deep vista the traveller might fancy that he caught, in the gayer light, a glimpse of the wandering Rosalind and her companions; the wearied princess and the motley fool, or of the figure of Orlando, leaning against an oak, and listening to her song; he could not even catch the last faint echo of that song, in a scene so different from the one his fancy had represented to him for the forest of Arden.

"Alas!" said he, "that enchanting vision is no more found, except in the very heart of a populous city, and then neither by the glimmering of the dawn, nor by the glow of evening, but by the paltry light of stage-lamps. Yet there, surrounded by a noisy multitude, whose cat-calls often piped instead of the black-bird, I have found myself transported into the wildest region of poetry and solitude; while here, on the

very spot which Shakspeare drew, I am suddenly let down from the full glow of my holiday-feelings into the plain reality of this work-a-day world."

Here ensued a conversation on illusions of the imagination and on the various powers of exciting them, shown by English poets, especially by Shakspeare and Milton, which it is unnecessary to repeat in this place. Such was its length, that Mr. Simpson's part in it had gradually become less and less active, while Willoughton's increased earnestness had rendered him less and less sensible of the deficiency of replies. At last, on his asking, rather peremptorily, whether his friend did not recollect some fine effects of the towers of Windsor Castle upon the imagination, Mr. Simpson, fortunately concealing how nearly he had approached to a nap, answered, "No, no; I do not recollect any thing of what you tell me; but you were talking a little while

ago of Hamlet and towers; now, if you want towers that would do honour to Hamlet, go to Warwick Castle, and if we reach it, as we hope, this night, you can walk from the inn while supper is preparing, and you will find, on the terrace or platform before the gates, towers frowning and majestic enough. If the moon is up, you will see them to perfection, and, as you are so fond of ghosts, you can hardly fail to make an assignation with one there."

"I shall delight in the advantage," replied Willoughton, laughing: "Though I am not so fond of ghosts in general, as you seem to think. It is only for a few of particular excellence, that I feel a friendship; for them, indeed, I am willing to own even an affection."

Willoughton, not receiving a rejoinder, observed, that his friend had fallen again into his nap; and he returned to the busy thoughts, to which his first view of this

land of Arden, the ground of Shakspeare, had led. Sunk in reverie, he was no longer in the living scene, but ranging over worlds of his own, till a jolt of the carriage awoke his companion; who, shaking his head, and looking out of the window, with the sudden alertness of one who thinks he has been losing time, now supposed himself bound to brush up his thoughts and to talk to his friend.

Willoughton could well have spared the interruption, till a remark, delivered with an air of self-satisfaction, touched the string that recalled him willingly to the present scene.

"There now is an oak," said Simpson, "that may have been of Elizabeth's time, by the hollowness of its vast trunk and the state of its branches."

"Ay, long before her time," said his companion, "and perhaps Shakspeare's eyes have dwelt on it; perhaps he has rested

under its shade:—O! we are coming now to something like the Forest of Arden: see how finely the woods rise in the distance, and what a rich gleam the western sun throws along the ground, beyond those low-hung boughs on our left."

As the travellers advanced upon Kenilworth-chace, the country assumed a more forest-like appearance, and a new train of ideas engaged Willoughton, on approaching the venerable ruins of the once magnificent castle, at one period its prison, and at another, the *plaisance* of royalty, where Edward the II. groaned under the traiterous power of Mortimer, and his abandoned Queen; and where the crafty Leicester entertained Elizabeth, with princely splendour. The domain of this castle, with its parks and chaces, included a circuit of nearly twenty miles; and when a survey of it was taken in the reign of James the I., on its forfeiture by the voluntary exile

and contempt of Sir Robert Dudley,—the son of Leicester and of his first wife, the Lady Sheffield,—the woods alone were valued at twenty thousand pounds, according to Dugdale, who observes of the castle and its territory, that "the like, both for strength, state, and pleasure, was not within the realm of England."

Recollections of the long and varied history of this castle, crowded upon the mind of Willoughton, and he looked out, with impatience, for a glimpse of its stately towers in the distance, and then of its mouldering gateways, in the sun gleam, beneath the woods that now rose round him with majestic shade. Here, at least, was a mass and pomp of foliage worthy of the noble ruin he was approaching and of the memory of Arden; and, when he first caught a view of the grey walls and turrets overtopping the woods, lighted up by the evening sun, whose long beams, slanting

now under the boughs, touched with a golden flush, the bending trunk of many an old beech standing deep within the shade, he uttered a note of admiration and curiosity that discomposed Mr. Simpson, who immediately directed the postilion to make his way to the nearest gate.

Soon afterwards they found themselves in a valley, whose woody slopes excluded all distant prospect, and confined their attention to the venerable relique, which seemed to characterise, with its own quiet gloom, the surrounding landscape. They observed the several fine and detached masses of the castle rising on a lone rock in the centre of this secluded little valley; and, as they drove towards the only entrance of the area of these deserted courts, near the square-turreted gateway, which Leicester built for the grand approach to the castle, the impatience of Willoughton became tempered with a gentle and

luxurious melancholy, and he forgot even Shakspeare, while he was influenced by somewhat of the poet's feelings.

But a sense of real life broke in upon him even in this scene of solemn grandeur, and it required somewhat of the patience of a philosopher to endure, in the full glow of his present enthusiasm, the clamorous impetuosity of idle children, who, on the first sound of wheels, were seen running to assail the strangers from every cottage on the neighbouring banks. The visions of quiet solitude and of venerable antiquity were, in an instant, dispersed; the chaise was surrounded, and the travellers, having alighted, made their way with difficulty to the little gate, that led through a garden beside Leicester's ruined tower into the area that was once the lower court of the castle, followed by a noisy troop, whom neither money, nor command, could for some time disperse.

The tower—the gateway being now closed up,—was no longer accessible to curiosity, nor could gratify it by any traits of the customs of former times. No warder's bench lurked within the gloom, nor portcullis hung in the arch. The warden's chamber for those, who, by military tenure, kept guard on certain nights of the year, was transformed into a light parlour, and the whole building changed into a modern habitation. From the green and broken square, anciently the lower courtyard, the travellers looked up to the noble mass of ruins that yet stand proudly on their rocky knoll, and form three irregular sides of what was once the inner and grand court.

Of the fourth side, which separated the upper from the lower court, are now no vestiges, save in the inequality of the ground where their foundations stood, and where the walls, fallen from above,

may lie buried under the turf and briers, that now cover the spot.

On the left, the shattered walls of that lofty pile, built by Leicester and still called by his name, advance proudly to the edge of the eminence that overlooked the lower court, hung with the richest drapery of ivy; on the right, stands the strong square tower, called Cæsar's, which, though the most ancient part of the castle, appears fresher and less injured by time, than parts that were raised some ages later. This was the keep, or citadel, of the castle; and the prodigious thickness of the walls appears through the three arches in front, proportioned and shaped like some which may yet be seen in aqueducts near Rome; the walls here show a depth of fifteen or sixteen feet. The stone, of which this noble tower is built, is of closer texture and of a greyer hue, than that in any other part of the building; and this hue har-

monizes beautifully with the ivy towers, which overshadow its arches and door-cases, and with the ashlings and elder crowning its summit, which highly over-tops every relique of this once magnificent abode of princes.

"It should seem," said Willoughton, "that no human force could lay low walls of such strength as these; yet, as one side of the tower is destroyed, while the other three remain nearly entire, it must have been assailed by some power more sudden and partial than that of time."

"Yes, Sir, yes," said a man, who had been standing by, observing the strangers with attentive curiosity, "that part was pulled down by Cromwell's soldiers, and, if they had had more time on their side, they would have pulled it all down; as it was, they did a mort of mischief."

Willoughton turned to look at his informer, and saw a tall, thin man, who ap-

peared to be a villager, and who, without waiting for encouragement, proceeded: "I have heard say, they destroyed all that stood between Cæsar's and John O'Gaunt's tower there, at the end of the great hall, and a deal on the other side of the court, between the Whitehall and Lord Leicester's buildings."

"Are those walls before us the remains of the great hall?" inquired Mr. Simpson, pointing to a picturesque mass of ruins, standing on the third side of the upper court, and seen in perspective between the other two.

"Yes, Sir," said the man, "that there was the great banqueting-hall where"—

"Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth," observed Willoughton. "How beautifully the ivy falls over those light Gothic window-mullions and that arched door-way, so appropriately and elegantly sculptured with vine-leaves! The sun

now slopes its rays through the arch, as if purposely to show the beauty of its proportion and the grace of the vine that entwines it."

"Ay," said Mr. Simpson, "many a pitcher of wine and many a baron of beef have been carried under that arch by the king's yeomen, when Henry the Third kept his court here."

"I doubt whether by yeomen," replied Willoughton, "for, though yeomen of the household are mentioned, about this time, yeomen of the guard, a part of whose office it afterwards became to carry certain dishes to the king's table, do not occur till the reign of Henry the Seventh. However, it is probable, that, before the appointment of the latter, yeomen of the household might perform this business on state occasions, and in that very hall may have stood before the long tables, in double row, with wine ewers in their hands."

"Those were times worth living in," observed Mr. Simpson.

"Ay, those were jolly times! Sir," said the stranger-man; "it's lonely and sad enough in that old hall now; nothing but briers and ivy. Why, there is an ivy tree now against that old wall there, partly as old as the wall itself. Look, Sir, it is as grey, and almost as sapless as the stone it crawls upon, though the trunk is such a size, and hardly shows a green leaf, spring or summer."

The travellers made their way among the briers to take a nearer view of it; and, if verdant festoons of younger plants had charmed them, Willoughton, at least, was no less affected by the withered sinews and grey locks of this most forlorn and aged tree, which had itself become a ruin, while adorning another. He climbed over hillocks of briers and weeds, which now covered the ruins of walls, fallen into

this court-yard, and he looked down into the area of the great hall, through a doorway which had once led from it by a vestibule towards the white-hall, of which latter hardly a vestige remains, and to King Henry's lodgings. Here he distinguished the upper end of that magnificent banqueting-room, the very spot where the *deis*, or high table, had stood, which had feasted kings and princes, its lords, or visitors; where Henry the Third had sitten, where John O' Gaunt had caroused, and where Elizabeth had received the homage of Leicester.

At one end of this platform were still the remains of the large bay-window, opening upon the grand-court, where the cupboard had stood, and the golden plate was piled; at the other end, a windowed recess bowed out towards the spot, where there had been a lake, and to woods, that still flourished. This also, on state occa-

sions, had probably held a plate-board, or cup-board, and, on others, had been occupied as a pleasant seat, commanding the finest views of the park.

The four walls only of this noble hall marked its former grandeur, not a fragment of either roof, or floor, remaining; the ground, upon which Willoughton immediately looked, having been the foundation of a chamber, or hall, for domestic and inferior guests, under the great one, which was eighty-six feet in length, and forty-five in width.

Those walls, where gorgeous tapestry had hung, showed only the remains of door-ways, and of beautiful gothic windows, that had admitted the light of the same sun, which at this moment sent the last gleam of another day upon Willoughton, and warned him, that another portion of his life too was departing.

The melancholy scene around him spoke, with the simplicity of truth, the brevity and nothingness of this life. Those walls seemed to say—"Generations have beheld us and passed away, as you now behold us, and shall pass away. They have thought of the generations before their time, as you now think of *them*, and as future ones shall think of you. The voices, that revelled beneath us, the pomp of power, the magnificence of wealth, the grace of beauty, the joy of hope, the interests of high passion and of low pursuits have passed from this scene for ever; yet we remain, the spectres of departed years and shall remain, feeble as we are, when you, who now gaze upon us, shall have ceased to be in this world!"

"Why, here is a stone bench yet in this old window," said Mr. Simpson; "and a pleasant window it is still. This homely

bench has outlived all the trappings of the castle, though, I dare say, it was little valued in their time!"

"You see, Sir," said the old man, "it belongs to the wall itself; else it would have been carried off long ago."

Willoughton turned at the now repeated voice of this stranger, whose intrusion he did not entirely like, though his knowledge of the castle might be useful, and his conduct did not appear to be ill-meant. To an inquiry, whether he lived in the neighbourhood, he answered, "Hard by, Sir, in Kenilworth. I saw you was a stranger, Sir, and thought you might like to know a little about the castle here; and, unless you hap to light on such a one as me, you may go away as wise as you came—for, you will know nothing. No offence, I hope, Sir."

"No, no; no offence at all;" replied Willoughton; "and since you are so well

acquainted with this spot, let me hear a little of what you know of it."

"Ay, let us hear what you have to say," said Mr. Simpson.

Willoughton, turning as he heard this, perceived his friend seated in the recess he had before noticed. Much remained of the beautiful stone-work of this bay-window, and it now showed itself upon the glowing west, where the sun had just descended, behind the dark woods of the valley. He advanced into it, and looking out upon the scenery, was interested by the stillness and solemnity that began to prevail over it. At some distance down the steep bank on which the castle stands, he could distinguish fragments of the walls that once surrounded it, with here and there some remains of a tower, or a banqueting-house. The ground below seemed marshy, but pasture of a better green stretched up the opposite slopes,

and mingled with the woods, that, on every side, shut out the world! This valley seemed the home of a composed melancholy.

"But where," said Willoughton, "is the noble lake that, in Leicester's time, surrounded this castle, on which, as you may have heard, Queen Elizabeth was welcomed with pageants and so much flattery?"

"Ay, where is it?" echoed Mr. Simpson, looking at the old man with an air that seemed to say, "Now we have some use for you, and will put you to the test."

But Willoughton, without giving him time to reply, proceeded:—

"I am doomed to disappointment in Arden. For many miles, I could not discover any thing like a forest-shade, that might have sheltered a banished court, or favourite; and here not a wave of the lake, that delighted a festive one, and

which might have supplied me, with a floating island, moving to the sound of invisible music, or to the shells of surrounding tritons and sea-nymphs. Nay, I cannot even catch a gleam of the torches, which, on such an occasion, might have thrown their light on the woods and towers of the castle, and have quivered on the waters over which they passed."

"No, sir," said the old man, "it would be a hard matter to find any thing of all that now. Cromwell's people would have knocked all that o' the head, when they drained off the water, if such things had been there then."

"Cromwell's people again! However it is as well to remember them. What had the venerable scenes of Kenilworth to do with politics, or freedom? But thus it is; if even the leaders in political agitations have a better taste themselves than to destroy, for the mere sake of destruction, they let

the envy and malice of their followers rage away against whatsoever is beautiful, or grand."

So said Willoughton to his friend, who smiled, as he perceived that the indignant admirer of antiquity had allowed himself to speak of a military operation, as though it had been a popular commotion.

"Where went the line of the lake, my man of Kenilworth?" asked Simpson.

"Why, Sir, it flowed round two sides of the castle, as I have heard say; it went from the tilt-yard, all along the valley here, for half a mile, and spread out at the foot of these banks,—as wide as to the woods yonder, on the hill side."

"What a noble sheet of water," exclaimed Willoughton, "with lawns and woods sloping to its margin and reflected on its surface!"

"Yes, Sir, all that on the opposite side

was a deer-park then, as I've heard from the account of some book, except that low ground further on, and that was pasture for cattle."

"For cattle!" exclaimed Mr. Simpson, —"how they would poach such ground as that!"

"But what a beautiful picture they helped to make from the castle windows here," said Willoughton; "when, on a summer's noon, they lay under those shades, or stood in the cool waters of the lake."

"Ay," said Mr. Simpson, "to such as did not value the land."

"It was just opposite the Pleasant, yonder," said the aged historian.

"The *Pleasant!*"

"Yes, Sir; if you look this way, I will tell you where it stood:—it was a banqueting-house on the lake."

"O! the *Plaisance!*"

"It stood on the walls there, down in

the valley, to the right of John O'Gaunt's tower here, and not far from the Swan Tower; but it is so dusk now you can hardly see where I mean."

Willoughton inquired where the Swan Tower stood.

"Further off, a good way, Sir; but there is nothing of it to be seen now. It stood at the corner of the garden-wall, just where the lake came up; but there is nothing to be seen of that garden either now, Sir, though we know the place where it was. Queen Elizabeth used to take great delight in the banqueting-house, as I've heard."

"It was pleasantly seated;" observed Willoughton.

"Yes, Sir; but there was rare feasting and music too, I reckon. She used to be fond of sitting in this very window, too."

"How do you know all this, my friend?"

"Why, Sir, the place is called Queen Elizabeth's turret, to this day, because she

took such a fancy to it; and it was pleasant enough to be sure, for it overlooked the widest part of the lake;—this bench had velvet trappings enough then, I warrant."

"I have no pleasure in remembering Elizabeth;" said Willoughton, as he turned to look for his friend.

"No!—not in remembering the wisest princess that ever reigned?" said Mr. Simpson.

"No: her wisdom partook too much of craft, and her policy of treachery; and her cruelty to poor Mary is a bloody hand in her escutcheon, that will for ever haunt the memory of her."

"You are too ardent," observed Mr. Simpson; "much may be said on her conduct on that head."

"She inspires me only with aversion and horror," replied Willoughton.

"She gives other people the horrors, too," said the villager.

"How do you mean, friend?"

"There are strange stories told, Sir, if one could but believe them;—there are old men now in the parish, who say they have seen her about the castle here, dressed in a great ruff about her neck, just as she is in her picture; they knew her by that."

Here Mr. Simpson, giving Willoughton a look of sly congratulation, on his having met with a person of taste seemingly so congenial with his own, burst forth into a laugh, or rather a shout, that made every echo of the ruin vocal, his friend smile, and the old man stare; who, somewhat gravely, proceeded——

"They say, too, she has been seen sitting there, in that very window, when there was but just light enough to see her by."

"A ghost in a ruff and farthingale!" exclaimed Mr. Simpson, in exultation;—"that is, surely, the very perfection of propriety in the ghost-costume;" and again the roar of laughter rolled round every turret of the castle.

"Why does that strike you as so absurd?" asked Willoughton; "this is only a ghost representing the familiar image of the person when alive. Can it be more ridiculous than the Scotch plaid for the supernatural being, whom we call a witch? And yet, when you and I used to discuss the taste of ghost-dresses, you did not object to that appearance; but justified it, as one with which popular superstition was familiar."

"Yes," replied Simpson; "but though the ruff and farthingale accompany our idea of Queen Elizabeth, it is of her as a living character, not in that of her apparition."

"And yet," rejoined Willoughton; "if you remain in this ruin, half an hour longer, till you can scarcely distinguish the walls, you will feel less inclined to laugh at Queen Elizabeth's ghost in a ruff and farthingale."

"Perhaps I might," said Mr. Simpson, "if you had not let me so much into the

secret of effect in these cases. Yet I question whether it would have been possible for Elizabeth's picture, arrayed in that ridiculous court-dress, supposing it actually to appear, to extort from me any thing but laughter."

"They say, Sir," said the aged man, "that she looked solemn and stern enough as she sat in that window, just where you do now, leaning her head upon her hand, or something that looked like one. She sat quite still, for some time, and old Taylor sat quite still looking at her, for he could not move;—but when she rose up and turned round, and made a motion with her hand—thus—as much as to say, 'Go about your business!' he thought he should have dropped, and would have gone fast enough if he could."

"Ay," said Mr. Simpson; "there was the characteristical in manner, as well as in dress. This must be a true history!"

"Well, friend," said Willoughton, "and what followed?"

"Why, Sir, then she went down this steep place you now stand upon, into the hall there, where *he* could not have gone, in broad day-light, without risk of his neck; she sank down, as it were, and he lost her awhile, it was so dark; but presently he saw her, all on a sudden, standing in that door-way there,—and I can almost guess I see her there now."

"You are a silly old man," said Mr. Simpson; and he looked immediately to the door.

"You would not like," said Willoughton, smiling, "to inquire minutely into the difference between purposely avoiding to look, and purposely looking in the midst of this story;" but—turning to the old man—"what next?"

"Why, Sir, she stood in the arch some time with a very stern look; but I

never rightly understood what became of her. Old Taylor said she passed away like a cloud; but then afterwards he was not sure but he saw her again, in a minute or two, in this very window."

"And have you never been fortunate enough," said Mr. Simpson, "to see any of those sights?"

"No, Sir, no; I hope I have no need of them; though, if I was that way given, I might have thought *I* saw things too sometimes. Once by Mortimer's tower, down in the tilt-yard, I as good as thought I saw a man standing with a mask on his face, in a moonlight night, with a drawn sword in his hand."

"That tower," remarked Willoughton, "was doubtless named after Mortimer, the paramour of the infamous Isabel?"

"They say, Sir, some king was once shut up there."

"Ay, Edward the Second, for a short time."

"And they will tell you a power of stories of what was to be seen about that tower, before it was pulled down, and after too; but I don't believe a word of them. People are always conjuring up strange tales when they have nothing better to do. I have got an old book at home full of them, enough to make one's hair stand on end, if one could but make it all thoroughly out. I showed it to Mr. Timothy, the school-master, and he could hardly make it out neither; but he said it was no matter, for it was full of nothing but nonsense. He read me some of it, and I could not get it out of my head again for a week."

"Ay, it met with a thriving soil," said Mr. Simpson, "it's well you got the nonsense out of your head at all. But

how happened you to buy a book in a language you could not read?"

"I did not buy it, Sir; and, as to the language, I could understand that well enough, but I could not read the letters; and Timothy himself bungled at the spelling."

Willoughton inquired where this book was met with; and whether he could have a sight of it?"

"Why, Sir, it was dug out of the ground, where an old chapel once stood, belonging to the Priory hard by.

"O! I remember," said Willoughton; "there was formerly a monastery of Black Canons at Kenilworth, founded by Geoffry de Clinton, lord chamberlain to the first King Henry, and the founder of this same castle too: but go on."

"The place is used for a burial-ground still," resumed the old villager; "and it happened, that as Guy, our sexton, was

one day going to dig a grave there, he lighted upon a coffin, or the chest, or whatever it was, that held a many things besides this strange book."

"Indeed!" said Willoughton, eagerly; "let us hear a little about this."

"We shall not get to Warwick to-night," said Mr. Simpson, gravely.

"Why, Sir, it was one day last autumn, —no, I believe it was as late as November; I remember it had rained hard all morning; but whether it was October or November, I cannot be sure."

"That, I should suppose, does not much signify," said Mr. Simpson.

"Come, now," said Willoughton, "do let him be as circumstantial as he pleases."

"Willingly, willingly, only remember, we are not to sleep at Kenilworth."

"Well, Sir, I cannot be sure exactly of the time, only it had been a dismal day; but the rain was over, when old Guy came

running to me in as great a fright as ever I saw a man, and said he had found something in the ground, he could not tell what, but he never felt any thing so heavy in his life; he could not move it, and desired I would go and help him to raise it; and he stared, as if he was out of his wits. When I heard it was so heavy, I thought we might as well have my son to help us, for he was a stout lad. Guy did not much like this, I saw, for he was thinking he should find a treasure, and Guy was always a close one, and for getting as much as he could; it was only two years before he got his money raised for tolling; and there is not one in the parish has liked him since. However, I got my son to go with me, and we set to work, without saying a word to any one; and it was so near dark that nobody was likely to see us in that lonely place."

"Well! but if it had been treasure, it

would have belonged to the Lord of the Manor," said Mr. Simpson.

"Yes, Sir, I know that well enough; but you shall hear. We raised it out of the ground at last, and what should it be but an old oak chest. It was so large, a man might have lain down in it at full length; but what helped to make it so heavy was the iron bands that held it together, and three great iron locks, that fastened it. Now, as the place where it was dug up was the east end of the church, Guy took it into his head it contained church plate, that had been put there, in troublesome times, by the monks of the priory. If you had but seen him! he thought his fortune was made; he threw away his spade, and cut a caper as high as a wall. I thought myself there must be something worth looking at o'the inside. but by this time it was so dark we could hardly see what we were about; so I sent

my son home for the lantern, and then we tried with old Guy's crow to get the lid open. We got it off at last; and what do you think, Sir, we found? Why, nothing but old parchments; some with seals dangling to them, and some old books, dropping to pieces with the worms, though the leaves were thick enough, too: at the bottom of the chest was a great heap of dust."

"Did you find nothing else?" asked Mr. Simpson, fixing his eyes on him.

"No, Sir, nothing else," said the old man, with a little hesitation; "nothing else, except an old staff, with a large head; and there was a little silver on that and on a book I have at home."

Mr. Simpson inquired what had made the chest so weighty.

"Why, Sir, it was made of solid oak; six inches thick, I warrant, and had a great deal of iron about it. I took a fancy

to that book, though I could not read it, for I could not make out the letters; but there is some pretty pictures on the leaves, and the colours are as fresh as if they were just painted; and some of the great letters are done all over with gold as bright as the sun."

"A manuscript, illuminated probably by some monk of the priory," said Willoughton; "can I see it?"

"Yes, Sir," replied the old man, "I have it at home; but what made me wonder most was to see it look so fresh, after it had lain all that time in the ground; to be sure it was well wrapped up in parchment, and the trunk was thick enough, for that matter; but some of the other books dropped to pieces as soon as the air came to them."

Willoughton asked what had been done with the parchments; adding, to his companion, that they were probably the leiger-

book and some other muniments of the Priory, hidden when the terrors of Henry the Eighth first prevailed in the monasteries, and afterwards pretended to be lost, first from some hope of their future utility, and then from a fear of avowing their concealment.

" 'When Guy," resumed the old man, " found what sort of treasure he had gotten, he was ready to throw himself into the old chest, to be put under ground with it again; but I said there was no need of that; so we took out some of the best of the books, but none of the others had pictures; and Guy took the old staff, and then we did lay the trunk in the earth again."

Willoughton made many inquiries concerning the parchments with the seals, and the seals themselves, and whether his informant could find again the spot where they were deposited.

"Come, come," said Mr. Simpson; "let us leave this place; it is almost dark."

The old man said he thought he could find the spot; but that would be of no use; for it had lain so deep in the ground, that there had been depth over it for graves, and it was now beneath them.

Willoughton, shocked at this circumstance, said no more on the subject; but the old man proceeded.

"Among other things in the book, Sir, is a view of this old hall. I should never have found it out myself; for it was no more like what it is now than nothing: but Timothy Crabb, our school-master, knew it at once by this very window—and he read something about this window, too, —and by a door-way in the wall, yonder."

"How does it appear in the drawing?" asked Willoughton.

"Why, Sir,—but you shall see the book,

if you like. The hall had a high roof, like a church there, and a gallery ran all along the bottom of it, and such a chimney!"—

"Ay! like the remains of what we see here now, I suppose," said Mr. Simpson.

"No, Sir, as different as can be."

"O! perhaps," turning to Willoughton, "it was such an one as we saw at Penshurst; a raised hearth, with irons to hold wood, in the middle of the hall."

"No; that style," observed Willoughton, "was of later date than chimneys in English halls. It came in, I apprehend, with the castellated mansion, of which style is Penshurst, the more ancient part of the building at least. In the hall of the older castle, a chimney sloped back from the line of the wall into the thickness of it, and let out the smoke through a loop above. Thus, the raised hearth, on which the wood-fire blazed, projected into the

chamber, and was sometimes overhung by a canopy of stone-work supported by pillars, that gave it a resemblance to a gothic porch, such as adorn some of our finest cathedrals."

"Yes, Sir, this in the book looks like something like a church porch without the sides, the top comes so far over the hearth. Then all down the hall are rows of tables, with gentle-folk and ladies sitting at them, and—"

"I must see this manuscript," interrupted Willoughton; "it apppears to be a curious one."

"Come," said Mr. Simpson, "it is already so dark, we can hardly see our way hence. There is scarce a gleam of light left on the horizon."

"No, Sir, but the moon is rising yonder, and some gentry have a fancy to see this place by moon-light."

"O! we have seen enough of it."

"I recommend you," said Willoughton, "to avoid looking, just at this moment, towards the door at the bottom of the hall, lest you should see the stately form of Elizabeth in the arch-way; I had a glimpse of something like her just now; nay, I am not quite sure that I did not see the grave physiognomy of Leicester, under his small black velvet cap and feather."

"We shall not get to Warwick to-night, said Mr. Simpson, fretfully. "They talk of the patience of a painful antiquary; think what the patience of his friend must be."

"I have not the honour to deserve the former title," said Willoughton.

"Between us, we approach to it; the painful part of it, you will allow, belongs to me."

"In the old sense of the word," said Willoughton, "you do not claim it; and, as to the new one, your jests recompense

you for your pain: I have all possible inclination to deserve the title, in its best sense; at least by cherishing those inquiries, which make us intimate with the characters and habits of our fellow creatures in past ages, which show them to us in their halls, their ceremonies, their tournaments, their banquets, their domestic usages and even in their monastic retirement. These picturesque visions, in which the imagination so much delights, and every discovery, however remote, awaken a peculiar kind of interest and of sentiment no less delightful, which render antiquity, of all studies, the least liable to the epithet of dry, though dull and dry people so liberally bestow it. Antiquity is one of the favourite regions of poetry."

"Nay," said Mr. Simpson, "your woods and your meadows are the region for that. Who ever thought of looking for a muse in an old castle? But come, let us re-

member, that we are on the road for Warwick."

"Before we go, my friend here must show me his old manuscript; and I must see this fine ruin by moonlight."

"By moonlight!" exclaimed Simpson; "would you really stay for so romantic a purpose? We have seen it already by sun-light, and almost by no light at all?"

"The moon is rising, now, Sir," said the old man, "and by the time the gentleman has seen the book it will be risen high enough to give you light on your journey."

"Meanwhile, the horses will have no objection to a little corn," remarked Willoughton; "nor the postilion to a little ale, if this good man will direct him where to get it."

Mr. Simpson having added, that he too should like a little Warwickshire ale, the old man replied, "The ale they sell is not

much to brag on; but, if you please, gentlemen, I will direct the lad where he and the horses may rest themselves; and, if you will step with me, you can taste some of my home-brewed, and see the book at the same time."

The travellers assented, and their conductor, after having directed the postilion to a house, accompanied them to his cottage, where he produced the desired manuscript. It was written on vellum, and richly illuminated, and purported to be an account of what passed at Kenilworth, when Henry the Third there kept the feast of Saint Michael, and of some wonderful accident that there befel.

"There is a title-page written almost in the form of a triangle," said Willoughton, "and that about as closely as if it were printed. The date, which forms the apex of the reversed triangle, I cannot

wholly make out, but it is twelve hundred and something."

At the heads of chapters and sometimes on the broad margins, there were made drawings of parts of Kenilworth Castle, as it had appeared in the time of Henry probably, with some of the scenes which had there passed, and sometimes with single portraits of the chief persons engaged in them. These gave vivid ideas of the customs and manners of that period, and were traced, with more knowledge of perspective and more attention to proportion, than Willoughton expected. Among them was a procession of knights and ladies, led by numerous harpers, returning from the tilt-yard to the great hall, which showed a high sloping roof, while the windows below, at a considerable elevation from the ground, had round-headed arches, instead of pointed ones. The door-way, leading into it, accorded with the place where one

still appears; but the arch was differently constructed, and the receding mouldings seemed to have been ornamented with chevron work, or zigzag, instead of the elegant vine now sculptured there, which latter he had no hesitation in assigning to the time of Leicester.

Another drawing gave an inside view of the hall, as mentioned by the old man. The roof was of great height, open to the rafters, and with pendent beams below, formed into arches, ornamented with inverted pinnacles, nicely carved. Another drawing gave the inside of a chapel, of which there are no longer any remains at Kenilworth.

The original style of the building appeared very ancient, but this was mixed with one more light and elegant, like that of the pointed arches of the windows; and Willoughton conjectured this improvement to have been made by Henry the Third, who is known to have repaired the chapel

of the castle for his own use, during his occasional residence there.

There was a representation of a marriage ceremony in celebration at the altar, where a numerous assemblage of dignified persons were arranged in state. A king was giving the hand of the bride to a young man, who was decorated with many military insignia, but who was so far from receiving the gift with joy, that he appeared to be struck with consternation, while the lady, by her attitude, seemed to be fainting

In the margin was a portrait of a king robed and wearing a crown of gold, which seemed intended for Henry the Third, to whose statue in brass, in his monument in Westminster Abbey, it bore a considerable resemblance.

At the head of another chapter was an inside view of a tower, where a man was sitting alone near a lamp. In the back-

ground a face appeared at the grate. The same chamber was represented afterwards, with a man stretched upon a low pallet, but whether asleep, or dead, was not expressed by the drawing. The lamp had gone out, and, instead of a face at the grate, the moon appeared through a window beyond, and threw a pale light on the couch.

Another drawing gave a view of a chapel, or hall; Willoughton was not certain which: there was, however, something like an altar at the farthest end, near which stood a figure alone, the face concealed in a vizor, the left arm, uplifted, held a shield, the right a lance, but the feet were in a position of rest, though another figure near a door was departing, as if with the fear of being pursued, his hands outstretched, and his face turned back over his shoulder. There, too, the moon appeared through a window, and the light fell upon the lifted shield.

While Willoughton was musing what this could mean, the old man, looking upon the leaf, said, "Timothy Crabb, Sir, maintains this is a picture of the Priory-Chapel, he is sure, as it stood formerly. I should never have found it out myself, there is so little left of the chapel; but Tim makes it all out fine enough."

"Does he tell you what that figure means?"

"Not as I remember, Sir; but the book tells that, I reckon."

Willoughton turned over the leaves near the drawing; the language, the orthography and the characters were all so ancient, that he hesitated much. What he did make out, however, fixed his attention so deeply, that his friend lost the small remains of his patience, and declared he would set off without him. Willoughton then told his humble host, that, if he was willing to part with the manuscript, he was disposed to give him his own price for it.

"Why, Sir, I like to look at the pictures sometimes, and the gold is so bright it is a pleasure to see it; but the book for other matters is not of much value to me, though it may be to other people, seeing as I can't make it out; and, for that matter, if I could, I do not know any good it would do; for, what Tim did read made me as foolish almost as old John, and afraid to go near the castle, for some time, after dark, though I was always counted a little more sensible than some. But I see no good in such things, not I."

"You are a sensible fellow," said Mr. Simpson, "and I wish my friend here had a little less curiosity, and a little more such wit as yours. And now, Harry, do leave the book and come away."

"No, I shall first console myself for the mortification of your compliments. What shall I give you for the book, my friend?"

"Why, Sir, I don't know, I am sure; I don't know the value of such things.

Tim Crabb said it might be worth its weight in gold for aught he knew; but I leave it, Sir, to your generosity."

"It is well you do not leave it to mine," said Mr. Simpson, "for I should make a low reckoning of it."

The sum Willoughton offered accorded with his own estimation of so curious a relick, rather than with the expectation of his host, who heard it with exclamations of thankfulness; while Mr. Simpson expressed not merely surprise but reprehension, and the vulgar proverb of "Fools and their money—" was nearly audible on his lips.

"What other books did you find in the same place?" asked Willoughton.

"Ah! bless you, Sir," replied the ancient villager, "I wish I had a score of them."

"Well you may, my friend, if they would fetch you such a price as this!" was the ready remark of Mr. Simpson.

"It is his honour's own generosity, Sir, and I suppose he thinks the book worth the money, or he would not give it."

"Come, Harry," continued Simpson, "here has been folly enough for once; let us be gone."

"You are sure you have no other book like this?" inquired Willoughton.

"There is another or two, that do still hold together, I think," said the old man; "They have got no pictures; but then they have the same kind of letters, that cannot be understood." — He went for them.

"You will tempt the man to steal the parish-register, and offer it to you as a curious relick," said Mr. Simpson; "and indeed it will deserve your money better than this."

The old man returned with a small quarto, printed in black letter and bound in real boards, which had been guarded at the corners with brass; the marks of

clasps remained on it and those of a lozenge in the centre of each board.

"Though this is of later date, much later date, than the manuscript," said Willoughton, "I see it is one of the earliest books that came from the press in England. It appears also by its contents, to have been intended to assist the purposes of the monks of that dark age."

"A Boke of Sprites!" exclaimed Simpson, with a shout of exultation: "a boke of sprites, with the signs they may be known by, and divers rules to keep you from harm: the like was never known before!"

"Excellent! excellent!" said Willoughton; "and here is another black-letter volume. Well, friend, without looking further, what shall I give you for them?"

"This is past endurance!" said Mr. Simpson; "my patience is out!"

"O Sir! I will give you these into the bargain," said the old man, smiling; an offer which Willoughton would not accept, who paid the old man what he thought they were worth. Mr. Simpson, then taking his friend by the arm, desired his host to direct them to the chaise.

"I must see the ruin by moonlight," said Willoughton; "but I will not detain you many minutes."

"No, no; you will see the towers of Warwick by moonlight; which will be much finer."

"My good friend here," said Willoughton, "will order the chaise round to the gate where it set us down; and, by the time it arrives, I shall have seen what I wish to see."

"Be it so," said Mr. Simpson, with an air of resignation; "one is sure of you when a journey is to be begun; but never when one would end, or hasten it. I have

not forgotten our midnight rambles about Stonehenge! Doubtless we were the first human beings, who had appeared there, at such an hour, for many centuries; and what astonished me afterwards, more than any thing I saw, was, that I myself should have been conjured there at such an unseasonable hour; I, whose brain never hatched any of those 'high and unimaginable fantasies,' as your poet Gray calls them, 'which distract the heads of some of his readers.'"

"Ay! those shadows of the moon at full," said Willoughton laughing, as they walked towards the ruin, his friend remonstrating with him on the imprudence of this passion for antiquities and on his credulity. "And can you really hold," said he, "that these books were found in the manner related; and that any of them, especially the 'Boke of Sprites,' ever belonged to the library of the priory?"

"It does not seem probable," replied Willoughton, "that the old man should have invented the story he has related of the discovery of them; but, be that as it may, the books themselves announce their own genuine antiquity. The manuscript is laboriously illuminated, and it is well known, that such works were chiefly performed by the inhabitants of monasteries. The Boke of Sprites even was likely to have served the purposes of the monks. We know that the libraries of monasteries contained a most heterogeneous assemblage: Ovid, the Romance of Charlemagne, Guy of Warwick, and the Rimes of Robin Hood, have been found on the shelf with Homilies, and other books; which, although they might be tinged with the corruptions of the Papal school, ought not to have had such companions. You may recollect, that War-

ton, in the interesting sketches of ancient manners which he gives in his History of English Poetry, mentions this very fully; and that, among others, the library of Peterborough contained 'Amys and Amdion,' 'Sir Tristram, Merlin's Prophecies,' and the 'Destruction of Troy;' and books of this sort were not only copied, but often invented by the monks, sometimes for their amusement, sometimes for worse purposes."

"One of the old books you have relates to their castle, I think," said Mr. Simpson, looking up at the shadowy masses; which, shown thus faintly by the rising moon, seemed more majestic than before.

"Yes, and I perceive," continued Willoughton, "that even you feel a curiosity to know what may have passed so many ages back, on the spot we now stand upon."

"Why," acknowledged Simpson, "when one looks up at the very walls now crumbling into ruin, that were once so magnifi-

cent, and that inclosed beings with passions as warm as our own—beings, who have so long since vanished from the earth, one cannot help wishing to know a little of their history and of the scenes they witnessed; but, for your legend, I fear to trust it."

"It speaks of the times of Henry the Third," said Willoughton, "those were lawless enough to permit many adventures; and, if the citizens of London were then robbed in the streets even at noonday, what could travellers in the forest of Arden expect? But this Manuscript seems to tell of princely feasts given in the castle, and of adventures passing in the presence of the Court."

"Ay, if one could but believe them."

"A great part of the castle," pursued Willoughton, "which then existed, is now gone; and much that we look at, stands in its place; but that noble Hall, and Cæsar's tower and several other towers,

such as those where the moonlight falls, beheld the very court of Henry the Third, ay, and Montfort, on whom he had bestowed Kenilworth, and who added ingratitude to treason, by holding the fortress against his benefactor and liege lord."

They stood for some minutes in silence, looking up at the ruin and listening, as the breeze rushed by, to the shivering of the ivy, that overhung it,—all the shining leaves trembling in the moonlight. The pauses of solemn stillness, that followed these sighings of the air among the old branches, were very solemn, and the sound itself—so still, uncertain, and sudden, Willoughton could have fancied to have been the warning murmurs of one, who, in his mortal state, had lived within these walls, and now haunted the scene where it had once revelled, or, perhaps, suffered. It seemed like a voice imperfectly uttering forth some dark prophecy, and telling of the illusion of life

and the certainty of death. To Willoughton's recollection this spectacle of the remains of ages past, now glimmering under the soft shadows of moonlight, brought those touching lines of Beattie—

"Hail, awful scenes, that calm the troubled breast,
And woo the weary to profound repose,
Can passion's wildest uproar lull to rest,
And whisper comfort to the man of woes."

Willoughton stood so wrapt, that he heard not his friend's inquiry, whether he meant to pass a night at Kenilworth, as a sequel to a former one at Stonehenge; nor was he immediately aware of the nearer approach of his aged conductor, who said, in a tone somewhat tremulous, "You are now on the very spot, Sir, where Mortimer's tower stood; it was the main entrance to the castle, when there was a lake, and it opened from the tilt-yard, that ran along the end of the water into the lower court: you see, Sir, it was quite on

the opposite side of the castle from Lord Leicester's great gate."

Willoughton surveyed the place, but not a vestige of the building remained. "Here then," said he, "the unhappy Edward the Second was, for a while, imprisoned, before he was removed to Corfe and Berkeley Castles, his last abodes."

"If you please, Sir," said the man, "the chaise is at the gate; and, if you will take my advice, you will not stay here long, for I cannot say I like it myself; I shall begin to think I see that strange figure again, and I had rather not."

"Well, let us go," said Mr. Simpson, "or I shall begin to fancy something of the same sort, too. What did you say, it had a mask on its face?"

"Yes, Sir, and a drawn sword in its hand; but I don't like the place, Sir, let us go."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Simpson, "let us go; we—we—we shall not get to Warwick to-night."

A laugh from his friend, which he too well understood, both vexed and ashamed him. "I did not think it possible," said he, "that I could have yielded to the contagion of this folly thus; remember, however, it is not Elizabeth in her ruff and farthingale, that I fear, nor any thing else distinctly."

Willoughton laughed again triumphantly. "Better and better; your feelings are true to my arguments, in spite of your own. I desire no farther proof of the effects of time and circumstances—of solitude and obscurity on the imagination."

As they passed by Cæsar's tower, and inquired where the line of the castle-ditch had been traced, he observed, that probably the chief entrance had at first been

over a draw-bridge to that tower, though now no sign of it could be distinguished.

When the travellers were once more seated in the chaise, Mr. Simpson betook himself to sleep; while, on their journey of four miles through the checkered moonlight of woody lanes to Warwick, Willoughton did not lament the silence of his friend, which left him to the quiet musings of his own mind, and to the peace of nature, reposing under this soft and beautiful shade. The air was so still that scarcely a leaf trembled of the lofty boughs that overshadowed the road; and when the postilion stopped to make some alteration of the harness, the breathing of the horses alone was heard through all this scene of night.

There is a peace of the spirits, which has surely somewhat holy in it. Such is the calmness which the view of a midsummer-dawn communicates, or that of moonlight

on woods and green plains; and such Willoughton experienced during this short ride, till he drew near Warwick, when the beautiful towers of Saint Mary's appeared on the right, and the more lofty and distant ones of the castle on the left of the perspective; and these awakened the stronger interest of expectation.

Having reached the inn, and Mr. Simpson, late as it was, having ordered a good supper, they walked out to take a view of the castle. Finding that, at this hour, they could not gain admittance by the porter's gate, they went to the bridge over the Avon, on the outside of the town, and thence had a fine retrospect of the castle, with all its towers crowning the high, woody bank of that peaceful and classic stream. One vast, round tower of most warlike air, looking down upon the precipice, delighted Willoughton more than any

other. A part of the edifice, repaired and adorned in the time of James the First, containing the state rooms, which run in a long line upon the steep, was not in harmony with this tower, and gave very different ideas of the character and manners of the respective ages to which they belonged. The moonlight touched this tower with a fine solemnity, and fell on the tops of the dark cedars and other trees, that clothe the precipice, as it glanced to Shakspeare's stream below, where it rested in all its silver radiance, as if pleased to claim it for its home.

Willoughton leaned over the bridge, and looked upon the scene in silence. The brightness of the river, the dark, clear shade of the woods, reflected on its margin and rising with majesty up the steep, with the grey towers, in softened light, crowning all, formed a harmony of tints and of objects such as he had not often

seen,* and which recalled to him that state of holy peace he had so lately experienced.

Amidst the stillness of this scene, there arose a strain, as if commanded by Shakspeare's wand, and to which his words might have been applied. "O! it came o'er mine ear, like the sweet south, that breathes upon a bank of violets." It was the music of French-horns, sweetened by distance and by the water, over which it passed, accompanied by a few voices addressing the river and celebrating the bard in the well-known song of Garrick and Arne,—"Thou soft-flowing Avon!"

Nothing could exceed the beauty of some of the cadences, prolonged by the deep, mellow tones of the horns, or of the chorus, and of the close, that gave these words:—

"The fairies by moonlight dance round the green bed,
For, hallow'd the turf is, that pillows his head."

They brought tears into the eyes of Willoughton, and drew from him a deep sigh long after silence had returned.

Mr. Simpson looked about to discover whence this charming tribute to the memory of the loved poet came, and perceived two little boats stealing along the margin of the stream, under shadow of the bank that rose to the castle. The white awning of the first betrayed it to his eye, before it emerged on the moonlight; and now the measured trampling of the oars told its departing course upon the waters, till once again that chorus died along the air, and then the steps of the oars were heard no more.

The travellers remained for some moments, as if spell-bound, in thoughtful silence; and they left this enchanting scene and returned to their inn, without having uttered a word. This was an un-

usual mood with Mr. Simpson; he had caught it from his companion, rather than from the scene; and now, on the entrance of supper, he rejoiced to get rid of it, and to return to the more substantial pleasures of this world.

Willoughton, when he had retired to his chamber, and had, as was his custom, looked out upon the night, now overcast with gloomy clouds, sat down to examine his manuscripts, instead of seeking repose. Bound up with that of the "Trew Chronique," was another, entitled "A Trew Historie of two Mynstrells, that came by night to the Priory of Saint Margaret, and what they disclosed, and what one in the convent by his art, proved them to bee." This "Trew Historie" was more difficult to be deciphered than the "Trew Chronique," and Willoughton left it for the present, and took the "Boke of Sprites."

As he turned over the leaves, curious to see the thraldom of superstition to which the people of a remote age were liable, he often smiled at the artless absurdities he discovered, the clumsy inventions practised upon the fears of the ignorant by the venality of the monks. Yet he sometimes found his attention seized, in spite of himself, by the marvellous narratives before him; till, at length, he began to feel that he was alone, to recollect that it was past midnight, to observe that all around him was still as death; and gradually to think he might as well lay aside the "Boke of Sprites" till day-light should return and the world again sound busily around him.

He did so, and again took the "Trew Chronique," desirous of ending his long day, with some new traits of an age so distant from his own and of the style, in

which they might be shadowed forth. The mere spelling did not render this so difficult, as the character in which it was written, with its abundance of abbreviations and contractions.

The following is a modernized copy, which he afterwards wrote out for the amusement of a friend, who was fond of the subjects it touched upon, but had not industry enough to work his way through the obstructions of the original. In this copy, while Willoughton endeavoured to preserve somewhat of the air of the old style, without its dryness, he was often compelled to regret, that much of the effect of the story was lost, with the simplicity, brevity and quaintness of the ancient manner. However, he often retained the old words, where they did not seem to form too glaring a contrast with the modern style, and, now and then, somewhat

of the quaintness of the original, the title of which ran thus:—

A Boke,

Conteynynge a trew chronique of what passed at
Kilingworth, in Ardenn, when Our Soveren
Lord, the Kynge, kept ther his fest of
Senzt Michel; with ye marveylous
accident, that ther befel, at the so-
lempnissazion of the marriage
of Gaston de Blondeville.
With divers things, cu-
rious to be knowen,
thereunto purtayn-
ing. With an
account of the
grete Turney,
ther held
in the
yere
MCCLVI.

Changed out of the Norman tongue
By Grymbald, Monk of Senzt Marie
Priori in Killingworth.

THE FIRST DAY.

THE FIRST DAY.

At the head of this chapter was a drawing, of the King and Queen, with their train, passing under the towers of Kenilworth. Near the King rode a young knight of a very spirited air; in one hand he held his cap, bending towards the King, who seemed to be speaking to him, and with the other he reined in his fiery courser. At some distance, was a man pressing through the crowd, with eager gesticulation and a wild countenance, towards the King. The royal banner, on the tower above, was tinged by the setting sun, and the arms and caps of the soldiers on the battlement there glistened with the rays. The cap of one of these, who, as if to obtain a longer view of the King, appeared to have stretched too far forward, was falling on the multitude below; some of whom were laughing.

FIRST DAY.

It was at the feast of Saint Michel, that King Henry, the third of his name, with his Queen and sundrie of the nobles of the realm and a marvellous train of estates and gentils, came to keep court in Ardenn, at his castle of Kenilworth. The day was drawing to an end ere they arrived: and it was a goodly sight to see this noble company coming over the forest, till then so lonesome; and the last light of this day's sun glittering upon the helmets and lances of the King's guard; likewise on the gorgeous apparelling of

their horses and trumpets, with their banners unrolled, that went before his grace; also on the litters of the Queen, covered with cloth of gold and with tapestry of rich colours, brought from her own land beyond the sea.

This noble train, with all the spear-men attendant on the King, was like unto a little army covering the paths and tracks, for many miles, as they wound amongst the woods of Ardenn; or like unto some mighty river, that flowing along, appears, where the shades open in shining bends upon the plain, and is lost again as they enter beneath the gloom; but yet may you judge of their course throughout all the prospect. Like as you may the broken lines of the great aqueduct, stretching over the plains of our dear father of Rome; which, as we perceive its distant points athwart those solitudes, we connect in our minds into one great whole, grander

in its sweep than it might have shown when it stood complete.

There went before the King a hundred archers in pairs, sumptuously apparelled, and having the feathers of their arrows stained with green: the horns sounded before them through the woods: then fifty demi-lancemen, two abreast; then fifty pike-men; then trumpets, with their banners also displayed; then officers at arms, in their sur-coats, the serjeants with their maces. In the midst was borne up the royal banner, by six of the standard-bearers: the pipes of it were of silver, and were slided along the banner-staff; which was held with horn in a girdle of white leather, embroidered, worn by the King's chief standard-bearer.

The King's Highness came riding on a noble grey, widely encompassed about with pikemen, and attended by divers nobles of the realm and by knights and gentils,

without number. His Highness wore that day a cloak of purple velvet, lined with yellow satin, and furred with martin and ermine; on his head was a cap of black velvet, bearing a sable plume. His countenance was goodly and gracious, and he often turned and spoke to those about him.

On his right hand, rode the young Prince Edward, holding in his fiery charger, yet looking as though he would fain spur him to the top of his speed. Next to him rode the Archbishop of York. On the King's left, was his brother, the Earl of Cornwall. The Bishop of Coventry would have been there, but he was then lying sick on his bed; but the Prior and divers of the monks attended on the King.

First amongst the knights, that waited on his grace, was Gaston de Blondeville, a young Provençal; whom King Henry had raised, for some daring exploits in his do-

minions beyond the sea, to be a knight of his houschold. He was of comely person and gallant air; and managed his proud charger with such easy grace, as a lady might, with silken bandage, guide a fawn. He wore a cloak of pale olive, lined and guarded with rose colour; his cap was of velvet like to it, and he wore his feathers in the French fashion: for he was of the Queen's country, and had all the gaiety of her nation in his countenance and 'haviour.

Yet were there some in the court, men of English ground, who liked him not; it may be, because he was a stranger in our land, or that he bore a proud defiance in his eye, or that they envied him his favour with the King.

Some way before the Queen, went fifty of the foresters of Ardenn clothed in green, sounding their horns. She was in her litter, tapestried with cloth of gold, and she

was compassed all about with her ladies and her nobles and esquires. Her litter was borne by two brave coursers, right richly trapped with velvet, and led by pages apparelled in sumptuous liveries; other pages, in 'broidered doublets, went beside her, or following. Then came her master of the horses, leading her palfrey, very richly appointed, the bridle and breast-chain studded with jewels, followed by another of her palfreys, led by a page. Her Highness was adorned in a close gown of velvet, 'broidered about with pearls, and bearing upon her head a great hood of black velvet, richly sewed with large pearls. Following her Highness, came her ladies and gentlewomen mounted on fair palfreys, richly appointed and apparelled; a goodly company.

Then came her Highness's chariot empty, drawn by six horses, led by pages in jackets of scarlet damask, with the Eng-

lish crown 'broidered on their backs. They bore in their caps a white feather; dropping aside, in the manner of France, whereat the people murmured, and well they might; for such a sight of strangers, from her own land, the like was never seen! But the Queen bore herself so graciously towards the people, smiling upon them with her comely countenance, that she won away their discontent. Other gentlewomen of her court followed her car, mounted on palfreys.

Next came Eleanor, the widowed Countess of Pembroke, the King's sister, now Countess of Leicester, in her litter, with a sumptuous train: and then Cincia, the Countess of Cornwall, the sister of the Queen, right freshly apparelled, and sumptuously attended by noble dames and gentils; and a sight of people followed, in the different liveries of their masters.

Before the Queen, went her *mynstrells*

of music; who, when they came nigh to Kenilworth, began to blow upon their pipes, and to strum their stringed instruments with most sweet noise—so that the bells of a village there, which were rung for mirth, could not be heard so far.

Amongst the damsels attending the Queen, none were so fair as the lady Isabel, daughter of the Earl of Arundel, and the lady Barbara, daughter of the Earl of Huntingdon; who followed her Highness, on white palfreys. Ychon of them was beautiful beyond thought: the lady Isabel was the more stately and carried a higher brow; but Lady Barbara's smiles were blyther than the morn.

Soon as the towers of Kenilworth showed themselves upon the West, which, if it had not been for the glowing spears of those on the battlements, would hardly have been known from the dark wood-tops,—soon as they appeared, some half-

score of the foresters rode forward with their bugles, to give sign of the King's approach; but were straight sounded back by the trumpets, which blew up a blast, that filled the forest, and echoed to the very castle walls, ere the proud trumpeters would stop.

Then his Highness courteously commanded, that those who had come forth so many miles, to welcome him on his way, should be appointed to proclaim him at the gates. They waited not for second bidding; but, tuning up so clear and sweet, set spurs to their hobbies, and flew swiftly as the arrows from their own bows.

All the way hence to Kenilworth was lined with other troops of foresters in green; who, at certain distances, saluted the King, as he passed, with their bugles, in spite of the trumpets, that charged so loud and shrill their minet-flourishes: and

they followed in the Queen's train. The King's pike-men and lance-men going after of all.

At the first sound of the bugles before the gate, you might see the great banner of England raised upon the keep of Kenilworth. Then, the chief wardour of the castle appeared upon the turret; though he stayed not long there, but went down to join his lord, in their service at the gate. The archers behind the battlements stood in order; other bow-men and the lance-men ranged themselves behind the tower-walls, and the trumpets there answered the summons, with a blast, that shook the forest, and made the fair waters of the valley tremble; roughening the portraiture of towers and woods, which had seemed to sleep upon their surface, as in a glass of chrystal.

Then the Lord Constable, coming down from the keep, followed by a posse of his

officers, took to horse and went out to meet the King. As he turned out of the gate, he met the Prior of Saint Mary's, with the twelve canons, and a long train processioning, all in full ceremony, bearing precious reliques, to welcome his Highness: after them came the priest and sundry of the parish-church, singing.

The press of people, from all the country about, was so thick, that hardly could the monks make way among them. The castellan, a man proud and jealous of his high place, was not well pleased, that they should try to present themselves to the King, before himself; but they were soon right glad to follow in his train, for strait as he appeared, the crowd was forced back, and they passed, without difficulty, in that wise, full three furlongs.

The castellan, coming in presence of his Highness, leaped from his horse, and, on his knee, presented him the keys of

the castle, on a rich plate; the which his Highness readily delivered to him again, with a gracious speech, bearing, that they were well in his custody. Then, the Prior and canons of Saint Mary's showed themselves in procession, with banners, and chaunting sweet anthems, and his Highness looked kindly on them; after which they went on to the Queen, and, paying duty, attended her to the castle. But my Lord Constable, remounting his horse, rode bareheaded before his Highness, to the very gates.

Immediately before the King, was borne his sword of justice, by the Lord Hubert de Lacey; where, on the sheath, you might behold, in letters of rubies, these words, "Truth and Right." As he passed all the people cried out, "King Henry, King Henry, long live King Henry! and blessings on your sweet-favoured visage!"

Then, they threw forth on the air, for

joy, among other tokens, corn and flour; so that many of the nobles of the realm, nay, some of the King's guard, liked it not, for the flour-dust, falling on their garments, disguised them like unto grinders of corn: but they held their peace, as needs must, passing on in solemn stateliness.

Before the castle-gates, a great show of the King's bow-men were drawn out to receive him, and the courts within were lined, and every tower and battlement was thronged with his soldiers. There, too, were the foresters ready at the gates, who, on the King's approach tuned up their merry bugles, with might and main; as though one breath sounded through the whole of them. But, when the heralds passed under the towers, their trumpets took their revenge, for they gave many blasts, that made every court within shake for joy; and showed more like a triumph

of war than a flourish of festival. They on the ramparts now seemed to take the hint, and joined them with such warrior-sounds of fierce disdain, that the clear bugle seemed but as a shepherd-pipe beneath them, and, for a season, was not heard at all.

Certes, the noise of the trumpets and cornets, the clanging of bells, the trampling of horses over the bridge, the striking of swords upon shields, with, ever and anon, the shouts of the multitude, astounded cattle and fowl in the woods, far and wide. Old wives and they that might not leave their homes for sickness could hear the mingled uproar; and could know as surely, when the King reached Kenilworth, as those, who had journeyed thither to behold him. And many an outlaw in the forest, who feared to show his face among the crowd, lay hearkening in his den, or stalked under the old oaks, while

he watched the minutes of the coming twilight, and reckoned on the booty he should seize from careless travellers, returning, at night, to distant towns.

Some too there were, who, in the pathless holds of this forest, heard the far-off voice of joyance and society, with bitter grief; finding out, too late, they were not made for that lonesomeness of heart their thoughtless vices had condemned them to. Alas! for such, let them shrive and betake themselves, as penitents, to holy cloister.

When the Queen's litter came near the gates of the castle, her minstrels of music sang with most sweet glee, and the bugles saluted her as she passed into the barbican, or first tower of defence; but, soon as she appeared on the draw-bridge, the trumpets from the ramparts blew up a flourish, and then the minstrels stopped, though they had not finished their fit. And they did well; for hardly could there be heard the

trampling of the horses' hoofs upon the bridge, nor the distant music in the courts before the King. The walls and turrets, thronged with faces, seemed to be alive, and to shout, as with one voice, "Queen Eleanor! Queen Eleanor! long live Queen Eleanor!"—but some few were heard to shout, "Away with the foreigners!—away with all foreigners!" which the good Queen seemed not to hear, though she guessed in her heart what they said; and many a noble knight and lady near her knew well. She, with unchanged countenance, showed only sweet smiles to those numberless eyes, darting from the walls and battlements, all turned upon her litter, as it passed over the bridge, glittering in the last beams of this day's sun, and then entered beneath that deep and dark archway of the great tower, leading into the base court.

Beyond, in the sunshine, could be seen

the King's Highness, preceded by the Lord Constable, and having the Archbishop on his right and Prince Edward on his left, passing forward to the upper court; where, on the steps, stood the marshals of the hall, the stewards, the esquires of the household, with many officers of the castle, waiting to receive him, some with chains of gold on their necks: the royal banner waving over all. They stood so thick, looking over one another's shoulders, face above face, on the steps there, that they seemed like a rampart of heads; while below them, in the same court, the lance-men and yeomen of the household stood waiting to receive the Queen.

And truly it was a pleasureful sight, to behold that vision of light appearing beyond the deep portal, under which stood, on either hand, the wardours in their niches, to the number of eight; so dim, they showed like shadows more than substance,

albeit, they did not lack of that. And a more delightful sight it was to behold the Queen and all her train, winding through that dark arch into the beams beyond; the rich trappings of steeds and men, their breast-plates and spears and steel caps, all glancing in the setting sun. There, too, you might see, through the higher bars of the portcullis, the windows of the great chamber hung out with tapestry of silk and cloth of gold.

But that, which caused some surprise to those who watched without, was a sudden turmoil, that appeared around the King in the court, just as the Queen's litter was advancing forth of the arch-way. A man was seen forcing himself among the guards, towards his Highness, who turned his face backwards in the sun, as if to see what was going on; and seemed to rein in his steed, while he held forth his right arm to Sir Gaston de Blondeville, who, with cap

in hand, leaned forward on his courser, as if receiving some command. The while, the heads and spears of soldiers gathered round, moving in tumultuous hurry, rising and falling incessantly, like unto those stormy white tops coming on over a darkened sea.

On a sudden, the King disappeared: some thought he had fallen from his steed, struck by the hand of the stranger; and then, such was the throng of people beyond the portal to get forward for more certainty, that hardly could the Queen's guard keep them back, till his Highness was seen ascending the steps of the high court.

At last, out of the midst of the confusion a shield was seen raised upon the traversed spears of six soldiers, and borne towards the outer gate, having upon it a man stretched, as if dead. But at the great portal the soldiers stopped, and drew aside to make way for the Queen; his

Highness, meanwhile, with his nobles and young knight, had withdrawn into the state apartments.

When her Highness was gone by, they brought the man upon the shield into the free air without the walls, and lowered their burden on the grass; but the tumult of the people was so great, (they suspecting that he had attempted the King's life) that the soldiers with their spears had much ado to save him from their fury, or to keep a little space open around him.

He was a man of goodly appearance, that lay there, seeming without life. Anon, he began to stir himself, and in a little while opened his eyes; the which, when the people saw it, redoubled their fury; and they demanded, that he should be had to prison, for "he has assailed the life of our good King!" With that they made such a roaring, that the shouts of the soldiers, who wanted to set them right,

could not be heard, the women brawling louder than all of them together.

Thus it went for some time: and then, the noise being hushed, they found out the man was innocent of what they had suspected.

When the stranger had recovered himself a little, he stared wildly; and, raising himself up, he looked round him, as if examining the countenance of every one, whom curiosity or anger had made to bend over him. And so he looked again and again, till they asked him, if he thought he saw the countenance of any one there, whom he knew. Then he fetched a deep sigh, and said, "I as surely saw him as I now breathe, but he is not here."

Divers present then asked him, of whom he spoke, but he only muttered to himself, "I could not be deceived; it is impossible for me ever to forget him." Then he

shook from limb to limb, and was nigh going off into a swoon again. The people, meanwhile, pressed upon the soldiers to know what all this meant; and curiosity and pity began to take the place of rage.

The tale went, that, as King Henry had approached the entrance of the second court, this man, who had passed the portal amongst the King's horses, at the risk of his life, came beside him, and, having fixed his eyes with the greatest attention upon a knight of the King's household, cried out, "Justice! most noble Henry." Then, as if unable to utter something he would have spoken, he fell down in strong convulsions, and was nigh being trampled to death. His Highness, seeing the condition of the man, had commanded he should be taken forth of the court, and aid administered to him; and this was all the soldiers could tell.

There were some amongst the crowd who thought they had seen him before, and questioned him of his name, and wherefore he had presumed to approach the King in such manner; to all which he would nothing answer; but seemed heavy at heart, and as if his very sadness would not let him speak; only these words he uttered, once or more,—"It was he himself! I should have known him at Cairo!"

Some still said they had seen the poor man before; naithless he proved to be a stranger in Kenilworth. When he could walk, he was led back to the little hostel, where he had taken up his lodging, and there he remained closely hid from the eyes of every one, all that night.

THE SECOND DAY.

THE SECOND DAY.

At the head of this chapter was a view of the tilt-yard, at the end of the great lake, with the towers of Kenilworth above.—In the lists were two armed knights, on foot, each poising his spear at the other. They were cased in complete steel; their visors closed, each bearing on his helmet his plume and crest. There was somewhat very impressive in the station and in the whole appearance of these armoured figures. Each stood with his right foot advanced; the right arm, holding the spear, was raised high, displaying at once the strength and grace of an accomplished warrior. At the end and along one side of the tilt-yard, were galleries hung with tapestry, where sat the Queen and her ladies, and the King and his nobles, waiting to behold the encounter. The opposite sides were open to the lake, the woods, and the castle.

THE SECOND DAY.

In the morn, next after the King came to Kenilworth, there was tilting in the great yard of the castle, at which his Highness, with the Queen and her court, were present. This was the day of Turney; but, although this noble company made a goodly show, they were not apparelled with that splendour they showed on the chief day, as will be hereafter rehearsed.

Among the ladies of the court, none surpassed for beauty the lady Barbara, daughter of the Earl of Huntingdon and a favourite damsel of the Queen; her the King intended to bestow in marriage, during

his sojourn in Ardenn. She was innocent and graceful, as the fawns that bound in our forest, and excelled in all the accomplishments of the court. She had fixed her heart on Sir Gaston de Blondeville, a young knight of the King's household, who had entreated her of her father in vain; for, though he was of a good family, it was a foreign one, being of the Queen's country, and he had little besides the favour of his master to depend on. The youth was of a comely person and gallant bearing; well practised in all martial exercises of war, of which he had given some proof in exploits, and had latterly so much displayed himself in a fierce adventure against some of King Henry's rebellious subjects, beyond sea, that his Highness had incontinently advanced him to be one of his own knights. Moreover, the King, on hearing of his ill-faring suit, had taken that matter into his special cognizance; and the King knew

so well how to command the earl, that he consented to give his daughter to the knight, and his Highness determined the marriage should be solemnized forthwith.

But, on this very first day, after his arrival, his spirit was ruffled by a strange accident. As his Highness was returning from the Tilt-yard, accompanied by the Queen, and attended by the whole court, his harpers playing before him, a stranger came forth of the crowd, and falling at his feet, called out boldly for justice. Many there present knew him for the man who, the night before, had showed such striking signs of a disturbed mind; and now, noting his unseemly vehemence, they stopped and asked for what offence he demanded justice. The King, too, remembered him; and listening what he should say, the man, observing that, addressed his looks and his voice eagerly to him, and exclaimed, that he demanded justice upon robbers and

murderers who infested the highways of his kingdom with more violence and frequency than was ever known before, so that none of his peaceable subjects were safe from them.

The King, seeing the wildness of his look and the strangeness of his gesture, guessed the man was not rightly himself; yet he commanded him forthwith into the castle, there to wait, till he should speak with him, or order some others to do so; and the procession passed on.

Meanwhile, the King determined not to leave this matter, till he should have seen something more about it, with his own discernment. He went speedily into the white hall, which was the court of justice, keeping only a few of his nobles and other attendants, where he summoned the stranger before him, and had question put to him, who he was and of what particular grievance he had to complain.

The man answered, that his name was Hugh Woodreeve, a merchant of Bristol; and then he told his story—that, three years before, travelling with a very large sum of money in his possession, and being in company with three other travellers, two of them merchants of good repute, and the other a kinsman of his own, they were attacked in the forest of Ardenn, when about two miles from Kenilworth, and robbed of nearly all they carried. They did not part with it quietly, it was so much. His kinsman, however, was the only one of the party that had good arms; he had served in the wars, and he now manfully resisted the ruffians, who directed most of their vengeance to him; he was murdered on the spot; for the rest of his company, they escaped with some hurts. No one of the robbers was killed, but two or three were wounded.

Here the merchant stopped and seemed

ready to sink. His Highness, having declared his indignation at this villany, assured the merchant, that justice should be done upon the guilty, if they could be found, and asked whether he could swear to them, if he should see them again. The stranger straight replied, that he could truly swear to the murderer, and that he had seen him in the very court, nay, that he saw him at that very instant, standing even beside the King's chair.

King Henry, struck with astonishment, fixed his eyes sternly on the stranger, for a moment, and then looked at those around him. On his right hand, was his son, Prince Edward, and, on his left, his young favourite, Gaston de Blondeville, upon whom all eyes were fastened; for to him the answer pertayned, and to him the accuser pointed, with a look of horror, which convinced every one present, except his Highness, he did indeed believe he

saw before him the murderer of his friend, whether his fancy deceived him, or not. For the King himself, he inclined to think the accuser was either disordered in his mind, or that, from some unknown cause, he was the enemy of Sir Gaston; and his Highness knew well of the unreasonable and deadly abhorrence, in which many of his subjects of Britain held some of those strangers from France, who had risen into favour.

At the boldness of this accusation, Sir Gaston stood, at first, like one stricken with dismay; then, moving his hand towards his sword, he said, "but for the presence of the King, my master, I should soon avenge me for so foul a slander."

To which the merchant, now much more tranquil than he had been, said, "The same reason must restrain all; but I do not need it: I would not set my life

against that of an assassin! I ask for justice from his Highness."

At these words, Sir Gaston was hardly withheld from his accuser. King Henry commanded silence: and, as soon as all noise had ceased, he turned with a severe countenance to the stranger, and said, "Know you not, that he, whom you accuse is a knight of my household, advanced to honour for his valour?"

"Yea, noble King Henry," replied the merchant, "I have heard so; but, I repeat, he is the man who killed my kinsman! I never can forget that face: if I had met him in a distant land, I should have seized him for the murderer!"

The King, more fully convinced of the unsoundness of his mind, said, "Your passion has deceived you; thus far I am willing to pardon you; if you go farther, you must be taught what it is to dishonour a gentleman and a knight."

Upon this, the merchant fell at the King's feet; and, with uplifted hands, again cried out for justice! Henry, hardly less astonished at the resolution of the man, than that one of his household should be thus accused, (although he might have bethought him of the law he had himself found it expedient to make heretofore at Kenilworth, respecting robberies then committed in a very extraordinary manner on the highways)—King Henry, though astonished, began to doubt. He fixed a look, in which there was somewhat of inquiry, upon Sir Gaston, whose visage was pale, though his eye was fierce; but who may say, whether fear or anger maketh some men pale?

The King held it to be the last; a momentary doubt had entered his mind; but he promptly dismissed it. His Highness was commanding, that the stranger should be removed; and, for the present,

confined in the castle; when Prince Edward, who, young as he was, had closely observed all that had passed, craved humbly of the King, his father, to suffer the merchant to be further questioned; and the King consented thereto.

Then the man was asked, whether he could tell the year and the month, when the robbery he spoke of had been committed. He was ready enough with his answers, and said it was on the eighteenth of October, in the year twelve hundred and fifty-three, and on the chase; that he was sure of the time, because it was within three days of that, when he should have paid to a goldsmith the most part of the money, whereof he was robbed. Upon this, the King seemed to consider awhile, for he knew, that, about that time, a camp lay in the neighbourhood of Warwick and on the edge of the forest, and

that Sir Gaston was there, he being then serving as esquire to Sir Pierse Mallory.

At the last words of the merchant, Sir Gaston moved towards the King, as though he would privily say something; but, his Highness reproved him with a frown; and asked the merchant at what hour the robbery was committed, and what were the array and appearance of the robbers?

The knight interrupting the reply, then said aloud, "Sire! I entreat you, be mindful of the condition of disgrace, in which I must stand, if you seem to give countenance to this scandalous accusation. I know not, that I shall be able to breathe, if it be thought, that your Highness could, for one minute, think it possible I could have committed so foul a deed."

King Henry, looking kindly upon him said, "It is right you should be cleared with those, who know you not so well as

I do; and chiefly with those, who love not men of your country; and, therefore, would I examine this witless charge to the uttermost." His Highness then made all his questions over again.

The merchant considered awhile, and somewhat of his boldness seemed to forsake him: he then answered, "the number of the robbers was three; they were most of them tall in stature; they wore cloaks about them, and had masks on their faces."

"Masks?" said the King.

"Masks!" murmured the courtiers, with one voice.

The King, daunting the accuser with the anger of his countenance, said, "You could swear to this knight, as one of the robbers, and yet you say, he had a mask on his face! I suspect you now for an impostor more than for a moody man. If it prove so, tremble! for I swear by my

sword you shall not escape. I give you one more warning, to stop before you totally plunge into your ruin."

At these words, delivered with vehemence, the paleness left Sir Gaston's face, and he made a profound obeisance, showing his gratitude to the King. The accuser, dismayed, could not immediately find his voice, as it seemed. Haply, he could not so speedily send back his thoughts to the rest of his story. Incontinently, the most of the assemblage began to look ychon in other's face.

By-and-bye, the merchant said, that in the struggle between his companions and the robbers, two of the vizors fell off, and so he saw plainly the faces of the robbers, and he perfectly remembered the face of the knight. His Highness, without telling his thoughts on this, which many there present scrupled not to hold an after-invention of the accuser, commanded him

to begin his tale anew, and to tell, one by one, every particular he could bring to mind of the alleged adventure; but before he began, Sir Gaston, surveying him, asked whether, about four years back, he was not at Embrun, in the Dauphiné.

Denying that he had been at that place, the accuser then renewed his story, which purported, that he and his companions were travelling, about the close of day, through the forest, or chase, of Kenilworth, when they were attacked by robbers. He was bidden to repeat the number of them and of his company, which he did, without varying his tale. The King asked how long after sun-set it was when the assault began? which he could not readily tell; but said it was so nearly dark, that hardly could he see the figures of the robbers under the shade of the woods, from which they burst: the merchant paused a moment—

"Go on," said the King, impatiently:—

"But I could, afterwards, see them plainly enough by a torch I took from my companions, who had lighted it, at a smith's in a village by the way-side; an iron-smith's."

The King asked him if he knew the name of this village, but he knew it not; and whether he should know the smith again? and he answered, he thought he should. Then he was ordered to proceed with his story:

"My kinsman," said he, "was the only one of us, who was well-armed; and a braver spirit never lived. He fought with his sword that man, who now stands beside your Highness; it was a trusty weapon, and had done him good service in Syria, where he had it for booty, after a skirmish, as I heard. When my kinsman first made up to that man, I followed him with the torch, and to aid him, as I might,

with an oaken staff I had in my hand; but I received a blow upon the arm, that held the torch, which was knocked to the ground, and the vizor of the man fell also, that very man, who now presses behind your Highness's chair. The torch was not extinguished, and, by its light, I plainly saw that same countenance, that now glares upon me so vengefully. I saw it while he aimed the blow, which penetrated the head of my unfortunate kinsman, Reginald de Folville."

The merchant paused, seemingly overcome by the remembrance of this event, while Sir Gaston exclaimed,—"Was it Reginald de Folville? He was esquire to a knight of Saint John, and was then at Lydda: so much for the truth of your story in that main point."

At the first words of Sir Gaston, the King and the courtiers had turned their faces upon him; but though his words

were so strong and sufficient, they beheld in his countenance paleness and consternation. But he soon recovered; and, asking pardon of his Highness for the emotion with which he had spoken, accounted for it by saying, that Reginald de Folyille had been his earliest friend.

"Your father's friend, you must surely mean," said the merchant; "for he was at the wars at a time, that would have made that possible. You must have been a child, when he went there."

"I *was* then a child," said Sir Gaston, averting his eyes from the stranger: "and I must ever remember the kindness he showed me after the death of my father; I owe him much. He went from Provence to Syria; I heard he fell in battle there. Sure I am he never returned: he died in battle there."

"He died in the forest of Ardenn," said the merchant with solemnity, "and lies

buried in the priory of Saint Mary here. He died by your hand: that is his very sword by your side; I remember it now."

The audacity of this assertion struck all present and none more than the King himself. His Highness desired to examine the sword, and asked the merchant why he had not sooner challenged it; to which he answered nothing. Sir Gaston, as he delivered it on his knee to the King, said—

"If I know my accuser, which I think I do, he is no stranger to this weapon: he knows well that I usually wear it; but it never belonged to Reginald de Folville. My liege, it was my father's sword; he won it in the plains of Palestine."

The King examined it with attention. It was of eastern shape and finely wrought. In the hilt were a few jewels. Prince Edward, as he leaned over it, pointed out to his father a motto in an unknown tongue; and then, at some distance below

it, a date, with the Roman letters, H. A., remarking, that probably these letters alluded to some exploit achieved in the year noted. The King addressed himself to Sir Gaston for the meaning of the motto and of these letters, but he knew not their meaning, and said they were as when his father won the sword from his enemy.

Then the King addressed the merchant with the same question, observing, that, as the sword seemed to be familiar to him, he probably had been told the signification of the letters on it. With that, the merchant was hastily advancing to receive it of one, to whom his Highness had delivered it; when he suddenly drew back, covered his eyes with his hand, and stood immoveable. Those near almost expected to see him fall, as he had done before in the castle court on the night last past. Sir Gaston, at the same time, stepping forward, presumed to take it, and to deliver it again to the King,

with these words:—"Your Highness will not tempt the villany of this man by putting him in possession of the sword he falsely claims."

But the merchant claimed it not; nor could he even endure to look upon it. Heavy sighs burst from him, while with eyes still covered with his hands, he said,—"That was the sword, with which the villain murdered him; and can I endure to take it in my hand, and to look upon the blade, on which his life blood flowed?" and he groaned more piteously than before.

There were some in the hall, who instantly thought this sorrow of the merchant was a mimickry, and asked how it could happen, that his kinsman was killed by his own weapon; to which, soon as he could recollect his thoughts, he made answer, that the robber, on wrenching the sword from his friend, struck him his death-wound with it. The King, return-

ing the sword to the young knight, bade him keep it forthcoming till he should demand it of him again, and then said to the stranger these or such-like words:—

"You, a man unknown to me and to mine, and without a name, except as far as you have declared one, have dared to come into my court, and to accuse to me one of my own servants, a gentleman and a knight, of a crime most foul and incredible. You have related your story, and I have waited patiently for some evidence, that the murderer of your kinsman, if, in truth, he were ever destroyed by violence, was Sir Gaston de Blondeville. I find none, except your story. And in this you have not scrupled to affirm, that you would have seized him for the murderer, even in a distant land, though you also say, that your knowledge of his countenance was obtained only from the sudden (and, therefore, the uncertain) light of

a torch lying on the ground, at a moment, when the danger you were yourself exposed to, might, it may be readily believed, have prevented you from closely observing any face whatsoever. You must be held unworthy of credit; and I commit you into safe custody, till it shall be discovered who you are, and who those are, who urged you to this base accusation."

When his Highness had ended, they were going to convey away the merchant from his presence, but he craved leave to speak, and it was granted.

"My liege," said he, "at any other than that moment of horror, I might have seen the face of this stranger, without remembering it the next; but the impression made, at that moment, will remain with me, as long as the strong feelings, which then struck me, shall return with the recollection of my kinsman's fate. On seeing the same face, I was seized with the

same horror; your Highness's people can be witnesses, that yester-eve, when I saw that knight, I fell into convulsions, and was carried senseless from your presence."

His Highness, remembering what had happened, and, on inquiry, finding, that this was the very man, who had then fallen senseless, perceived, that the merchant had not spoken this untruly. He asked again whether he was known to any person in Kenilworth, also whether either of the merchants, travelling in his company, at the period of the alleged murder, was at hand. The accuser stood, for a while, bewildered, and then repeating, that he was a stranger, having only passed through the place, a few times, on his way to or from Coventry, said, that of his two companions one was dead, and the other following his merchandize, in a distant land.

"Then," said the King, "it appears you

cannot bring any evidence of the truth of your story; even so far, as that a robbery was actually committed. Your accusation of this knight is, therefore, likely to be impelled either by malice, or by some other bad motive. If it shall prove so, dread the punishment that awaits you."

"My liege," said Sir Gaston, "I think I know the man, and also his motive. He wronged my father at Embrun; and now his malice,—but this story is connected with family circumstances, that should only be divulged to your Highness; and, if you will suffer me to unfold them in private, I shall prove, not mine innocence only—for of that your Highness does not doubt,—but that man's former and present guilt."

At these words, the stranger fell again on his knees, and besought aloud "justice on "a villain."

The King looked long upon him and

upon Sir Gaston, and sat pondering awhile. He then turned to the merchant, and, bidding him rise, asked him, a second time, if he were not known to any one person in Kenilworth? and received for answer, "Only as a traveller."

"An adventure as remarkable as that you have related," pursued his Highness, "must have been known here at the time it happened, and must be remembered now. It is strange, if there be none who can recollect you also."

"My lord," observed Prince Edward, "he said his friend was buried here in the priory. If so, the prior must know him and his strange history."

"Said he so?" quoth the King; and, turning to the stranger, he inquired how it happened, that he was not known to the prior? and who it was that commanded the burial of his kinsman.

The merchant said, he had himself or-

dered it, and had conversed with a monk and even with the Prior himself.

"Then you are known to the Prior, at least," said the King; "he will surely recollect your story: let him be sent for. It is strange you should have said you were unknown: you are either guilty of falsehood, or your senses are unsettled."

The stranger raised his hand to his head and sighed. "I recollect the Prior," said he, "but he may not remember me."

"We shall see!" said the King, calmly, as he rose from his chair: "If you are innocent, fear not! if you are guilty, you will lose your life, in seeking that of an innocent man."

As his Highness left the hall, he looked somewhat sternly upon the accuser, and commanded, that he should be held in close custody, while more inquiry should be made. He then ordered Sir Gaston to attend him in his privy-chamber, and so

departed forth of the hall, leaving the accuser speechless and dismayed.

As the merchant was led through this court of the castle to the tower, where was his prison, the lady Barbara, sitting in her bower-window above, saw the passing crowd, and inquired the occasion of it; but none would inform her. While she gazed with curiosity, she observed Sir Gaston going to the King's privy-chamber; he looked not at her window, but went his way with a hurried step, and with such a countenance as she had never witnessed in him, till this time. At length, word was brought to my lady, her mother, of what had passed before his Highness. The Earl, her father, was promptly filled with disgust; and thought the occurrence would be sufficient to prevent the marriage, which neither his English heart, nor his pride of ancient blood, had suffered him to approve. His daughter, the lady

Barbara, was, differently minded; she would not believe him she loved capable of even a dishonourable action, much less of so foul a one; and, assured of his innocence, she would have thrown herself at the King's feet, had that seemed always, as it did at first, proper, to urge his Highness to clear Sir Gaston instantly from the suspicion.

But truly the King needed no advocate for Sir Gaston de Blondeville; and so she thought, at last. His Highness's own inclination was sufficient; and so angered was his generous spirit by what he held to be not only a false, but a malicious accusation, that he had determined after proof of this, to give a signal warning by the accuser's doom; and this not only to prevent other false accusations proceeding from private motives, but to reprove and caution those of his subjects, who had a public prejudice against strangers, and

were too likely to delight in the ruin of such especially as had risen to honours.

The King, therefore, willingly gave audience privately to the young knight, that he might explain to him the circumstances, which should assure him of his innocence. What Sir Gaston told his Highness was never assuredly known; some reports went on one side of the matter, some on the other: there was not one witness of what passed. Who then might know, unless they could guess by the countenances, and by what passed, when the hearing was over? But, if they had gone by no other guide, they would have been all for the knight, since he had made the King quite convinced; and moreover, the Earl of Huntingdon was summoned to the closet, where the King promised him the honour of the young knight would always remain unsullied in his opinion; and so commanded, that the marriage with the

lady Barbara should be solemnized, as had been before appointed, on the day next following.

The Earl besought, nay, as some say, dared to remonstrate, that the marriage should be postponed till the stranger should have been lawfully convicted of falsehood; but his Highness said, "Nay; lest it should seem that the accusation was probable enough to require such delay. It is already well-known, as a matter agreed upon, that the nuptials are to be held on the morrow, the preparations are nearly all made, and they are public. It is necessary for the honour of Sir Gaston de Blondeville, that the appointment should be kept. If you are not convinced, still you will not be required to make disavowal of any thought you may have; for I myself will lead your daughter to the porch, and will so, by my presence and by this act of parental kindness, show my

estimation both of the fair bride and of him who shall become your son. Farther proof of my regard shall not be wanting hereafter."

His Highness was peremptory, and the Earl, swayed by his master's positive opinion, and, it may be, by that promise of regard hereafter, at last obeyed.

While these things were passing in the King's chamber, the unhappy merchant was taken to a turret of the castle, called Cæsar's Tower; and there, with nothing but a pallet and the bare walls, was left to think of his jeopardy. What his thoughts were I know not; but he was heard sorely to sigh and groan, and with good reason; for, if he knew himself perjured, he knew also, that he should find no mercy from the King; and, if innocent, he could expect little justice against so great a favourite. But, whatever were his meditations, they held not till night, for he was called and

led forth of the tower into the presence of the King; and, before even-song, the Prior of Saint Mary's was in attendance upon his Highness. He was not an aged man, yet was he a stern one. When he was asked whether ever before he had seen the merchant, he answered resolutely, that he had no knowledge of him. The same question being put to the merchant, touching his knowledge of the Prior, he returned a like answer.

At this seeming self-contradiction, the King could scarcely command his anger, till it was discovered, that a Prior of Saint Mary's had died, since the time when the murder was alleged to have been committed, and that it must needs be he, whom the merchant meant.

"But, where is the monk, with whom you consulted?" asked the King; can you tell his name?"

"His name was Ewdwyn," replied the merchant.

"He died yesternight!" said the Prior.

At this there was a pause, and a dead silence throughout the chamber. Sir Gaston looked darkly on his accuser; his accuser directed his eyes to the King and then on high; but, in a short minute, he fell down, as though he were a dying man. The King, touched at his sufferings, commanded him from his chamber, that aid might be administered unto him. And then, that he might know whether this accusation of Sir Gaston were through malice, or mistake—for now pity inclined him to think the last—and also, that Sir Gaston might have mistaken, when he took this for the man, of whose deeds at Embrun he had talked; that he might know the truth on all this, he ordered the Prior to make inquiry in his community, whether the body of any person known to have been murdered in the forest of Ardenn, three years before, had been deposited in the chapel, or in the cemetery of the convent. Like-

wise, he commanded the Prior to have inquiry made in Kenilworth, whether any person remembered such an accident, or any house had received the dead body. And this he ordered, that it might always be seen he had desired to have justice done towards the wretched merchant, as well as for Sir Gaston de Blondeville.

This being appointed, the King departed to his great chamber, there to keep his state; the Prior to his convent, to resume his spiritual musings; the accused lover to his mistress; and the merchant was conveyed to his prison tower.

The King kept state, that night, with the Earl of Cornwall, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishop of Lincoln, Henry de Wernham, his chaplain, who also had the custody of the Great Seal, the Earl of Norfolk, the Earl of Hereford and a number of other nobles of the realm; but the Queen kept her state apart.

The King's great chamber was marvellous to behold. There were twenty-five wax-lights held by esquires of the household, all in the King's livery, gentils as they were; also twenty-five wax torches were fixed high up over the tapestry. The walls were, that night, gorgeous with the story of Troy-town in ancient tapestries; there you might see the flames burning and the towers falling, and old King Priam, with beard as white as snow, his crown upon his head, and his Queen Hecuba tearing her dishevelled locks for grief. And there was that renowned son, who carried off his aged father, with his little child holding by his garment, and his wife following, all disconsolate. This was a piteous sight to see pourtrayed; but that it were nothing save a heathen story.

The floor of that chamber was not strewed either with rushes or with litter of any sort, but was laid in little checquers

of divers colours; and, where his Highness sat, under his cloth of state, was spread a silken carpet of full crimson, fringed about with gold, as likewise his chair and canopy of estate. But the finest sight was the cup-boards, piled up with plates and cups of gold and silver, in readiness for the King, when he should take his VOIDE. These were in that great Oriel, which his Highness had newly made in this chamber, before the bay; and which was closed about with painted glass from the highest cup-board to the arched roof, where hung a silver lamp, that made the whole glow with its light.

There were, that night, playing in the chamber, the King's twelve minstrels, all clothed, for his honour and dignity, in sumptuous livery, with their virger to order their pipyngs and blowings. There were, besides, the children of the chapel singing, at times, from the brown gallery; so that, the doors being open, you might

have heard them through all that side of the castle; and those, who sat afar off in the great hall, needed none other music.

There also was Maister Henry, the versifier, whose ballad of the Giant of Cornwall was this night rehearsed to the harp by Richard the King's harper, as was his famous Chronicle of Charlemagne, which lasted, till his Highness was well nigh weary, when he jocularly called out, having tasted of his golden cup, that Henry should have a butt of wine with his wages, if he would shorten his ballads by one-half. Maister Henry, who was a Frenchman, took this in good part, and, having especial care ever after to make his ballads nigher to too short than too long, became, in time, a notable rhymer. But let those do so who can. Some are famous one way, some another; for mine own part, I must be circumstantial, or else nothing, as this "Trew Chronique" in due time must show.

That night, the King played at "Check-

ere" with the Earl of Norfolk, on a board laid with jasper and chrystal, the checkmen being of the same. Some said the king's and queens were of ebony, studded over with jewels, but of this I know not.

But, the finest sight of all was the going of the chamberlain to the cupboard, accompanied of three nobles of the highest estate in the realm, that were there present, (save the King's family) to receive the King's cup and spice-plates; and then the bringing up of the voide before his Highness. And, first, the usher, having assembled the King's sewers, their towels about their necks, with the four esquires of the body and the knights and esquires of the household, to the number of seventeen; these, with divers other officers, being met at the cup-board, the Chamberlain took the King's towel, and, having kissed it, as the custom is, delivered it to the Earl of Norfolk, he being of the highest estate,

who reverently received the same, and laid it safely upon his shoulder. Then, the said chamberlain gave the gold spice-plates covered to the Earl of Hereford; and then the King's cup of massive gold, covered also, to the Earl of Warwick. At the same time were given to the knights of the household the Archbishop's spice-plate and cup, covered also, to be carried up, by the space of one minute after the King's.

And, certes, it was a goodly sight to see all these nobles and gentils marching up the great chamber (the minstrels playing the while), compassed about with esquires, bearing great lights to the number of thirteen, especial care being taken, as the manner all times has been at the voide, that the lights were odd in number.

First, then, went the usher, with his torch and rod, making passage; the chamberlain, with his chain and wand of

office; then the five esquires, of the body, bearing wax-lights before the Earl of Norfolk, with the towel; then, three esquires about the Lord of Hereford, bearing the spice-plates; then, other three before the Lord Warwick, bearing the King's cup covered; then followed one knight of the household, bearing a single torch; so making up altogether the just number of lights. Amongst them went four knights of the household, well renowned for bravery and noble bearing, with the Archbishop's spice-plate and cup.

When this array drew near to the King, he, standing up under his cloth of estate, which was rolled up high, with the young Prince Edward on one hand and the Archbishop on the other, the Chamberlain taking the covers from off the spice-plates, gave assaye unto the Earl of Gloucester. The King, before he took his spice, made a beck to the Archbishop, that he should

take his first; and the knights having advanced, as they well knew would be seemly, the Archbishop forthwith obeyed.

But, when the Chamberlain uncovered the cup, all the minstrels in the chamber blew up louder than ever, and so held on till his Highness took the ypocras, so that every roof in the castle rung with joy.

The King and Archbishop being served, his Highness's cup and spice-plates were again covered, but not so the Archbishop's. Then were the spice and cup carried to Prince Edward and the Earl of Cornwall, by the knights; to the bishops by the esquires of the household, and to the other estates by the esquires also. Which being done, his Highness forthwith departed for "all night," the trumpets blowing before him. Then, were three healths drank, one to the King, one to the Queen, and one to the Prince Edward; after which it were not meet, that the assemblage should

remain, and straight the great chamber was avoyded of all there present.

The Queen, that night, sat in her bower with all her ladies. There were mynstrelsy and dancing to the harp and viol. The Lady Barbara was the marveil of all, that beheld her moving to the sound of viols like unto some sprite, rather than to a poor mortal. Prince Edward danced with her a round, and the Queen often honoured her with her pleasing speech. Sir Gaston, though he beheld her, showed not his wonted joy. He stood apart looking on, and, when her Highness spoke to him, he seemed nigh to senseless of the honour.

The dancing being ended, Pierre, a Norman and the Queen's chief minstrel, apparelled in the guise of his country, sang some of his ballads on the harp, in his own tongue, which, albeit, they were not esteemed like unto Maister Henry's, yet did they not displease. The first tuning

was in words which have been thus rendered into English by one, who had learned much of the new speech, not then familiar, except with some few.

THE BRIDAL.

LIGHTLY, lightly, bounded the roe,
The hind o'er the forest was fleeing;
The small birds tuned on every bough,
In sun and shade their gleeing.

And purple cups, and silver bells
From the green leaves were peeping;
The wild-rose smiled in the mossy dells:
Nought but the thorn was weeping.

And so bright in the sun its tears did shine,
They showed like tears of pleasure;
And the airs of May, through the budding spray,
Breathed joyance, without measure.

For this was Isabel's bridal morn
Who loved each bud and flower,
The wild-wood shade, the mountain head,
The deep vale's mead and bower.

And now was her festival gaily kept
By hazled brook and fountain,
From the low green bank, where the violet slept,
To the blue hill-top and mountain.

And lightly, lightly, bounded the roe,
His footstep wing'd with pleasure,
And small birds sang from every bough,
Welcomes beyond all measure.

At the end of this ballad, the minstrel rang out his harp in full joyance; and then, falling note by note, he dropped into a faltering murmur, as of deep sorrow, and so continued for some space, till those who heard him, perceived the witch of melancholy stealing upon them.

The Queen, deeming such strain unsuitable to the time, commanded him to change the measure, and sound forth one more gay, a lay of Provence, her native land, whither she knew he had been for his learning; but he, enthralled by the magic

of his own mood, loving not to be commanded, still hung his head over the harp, listening to that pleasure-full melancholy and heeding nothing but its sweet sound.

At last, being made to know fully her Highness's will, he sang the song of a Troubadour; for, though he loved best the ditties of Normandy, his own land, there was scarce one of Provence, which he had not gained; and the Queen did not let him forget them, so often did she command those, which she affected best. And now he sang forth to his harp a "roundel" in the Provençal tongue, made by a knight of the "Order of Fine Eyes." They, who then heard him, would have thought he loved any thing less than melancholy, so light and debonnaire was the music he rang out; and many could hardly keep their steps from dancing to that gallant measure. But it lasted not long; for, making a

pause and looking wistfully at the Lady Barbara, he struck forth, on a sudden, some of his deepest tones, with a wild yet solemn grace, such as brought tears into the eyes of many a fair lady, and darted dread into the heart of one there present. It seemed as if the shadows of prophecy were moving over the strings, and calling from them some strange and fearful story yet to be. And then again did the harper's voice steal trembling forth, as do the moon's beams, when pale clouds pass over, saddening, but not fully obscuring their brightness; yet might every one hear plainly all his words. Here it is done into English by the same hand; but the verses be not all divided into equal numbers:—

O'er the high western wolds afar,
  Glimmer'd some lights of yesterday;
And there, one bright, but trembling star
  Among the streaky shadows lay,

The traveller's lonely warning.
But soon the winds, that sing day's dirge,
Did o'er that star the shadows urge,
And hung the night with mourning!

II.

"What steps on the waste are beating?"
He listened not long on the ground,
'Ere he fearfully heard a sound,
As of trampling hoofs retreating:
And a dismal cry and a foot draw nigh;
"Stand ho!" 'twas an armed man passed by:
But he spoke no sound of greeting,
And seemed like a death-shade fleeting.

III.

O'er the lone mountains riding,
He gallop'd by gloomsome ways,
Where night-mists were abiding,
Round the witch of evil days:
Her name is written on the wind,
That speaks in cliffs and caves confin'd.
List there when the waning moon goes down,
And thou'lt hear the call her spirits own;
But as they pass, hold a chrystal glass,
Or thou'lt sorely rue the wild witch-tone.

IV.

O'er the lone mountains riding,
  From a distant land he came,
No step his dark step guiding;
  But he thought he saw a flame,
  That bright, or dim, would sport awhile;
  Then vanish, as in very guile;
He heard, as he passed, the witch-name sound;
And his startled steed, at a single bound,
Bore him away from that evil ground.

V.

But o'er the mountains pacing
  As fast as he can flee,
Strange steps his steps are tracing,
  And a shape he cannot see;
And, though he flee away, so prest,
Whether to north, or south or west,
  Toward the past, or coming day,
  (So dim the night he may not sey)
Still oft by fits did ghastly gleam,
A corpse-light, all unknown to him.

VI.

He followed the light o'er deserts wide,
  Down in deep glens, where wild becks wail;

He followed by darkened forest side;
He followed with dread, though link'd in mail;
Till it stayed before an iron gate,
Where battled turrets kept their state,
O'er towers so high and massy strong,
They seemed to giant-king belong.

VII.

Sir Adomar looked him all around:
Turret on turret hung on high,
Shaping black lines on the dim sky;
Sir Adomar looked him all around;
Nought, save this castle, could he spy,
Though, heavily clanged a death-bell's sound;
And in each pause of the shuddering blast,
Moans were heard as of one from 'neath the ground!

VIII.

He struck on the gate with his good sword:
"Ho! wardour, ho!" but never a word
Return'd the wardour from within.
"The storm is loud, the night is dark,
I hear from the woods the dog-wolf bark.
Up, wardour, up! it were a sin
To turn a traveller from your tower,
At such a lone and dreary hour;
A Saracen would let me in!"

IX.

The wardour was watching through the loop,
How many were of the stranger's troop.
He had left his torch in the cullis' bar,
And it let down a light on the lonely night,
That showed him harnessed, as for war.
His coat was mail, his helm was steel;
His visor did his look reveal;
Yet o'er his brow it cast a shade,
That made the wardour more afraid,
Than did the crimsoned plume above,
Or the mighty grasp of his iron glove.
He would not let the stranger in,
Till one, awakened by the din—
One whom the wardour need obey—
Seeing a lonely knight stand there,
Bade the wardour nought to fear:
He feared still, but he said not Nay:
Yet he would not ope the portal gate
To an unknown knight, without his state
For neither squire, nor page, he saw:
He bade him then to the postern draw.

X.

The knight dismounted at the call;
The porter let him through the wall;

He turned the weary steed to stall,
And led the knight to the lordly hall.
I' the lordly hall, so wide and dim,
One drowsy squire awaited him.
The ashy wood lay, white and cold,
On the raised hearth, where late was told,
With fiery eye and accent loud,
The deed of martial prowess proud;
Where late was told, in whispers low,
Some tale of terror and of woe,
The while each listener bent his head,
Nor lost a word the trouveur said:
Till fear crept o'er each nerve and vein,
That late had swell'd to martial strain;
And shadows crept along the wall,
Such as the sinful soul appal:
Till each, who heard, look'd round with dread,
And saw some phantom of the dead.

XI.

Now silent was the hearth and lone,
Save that a stag-hound slumber'd there.
The tables in disorder were,
With relics of the evening fare;
The household to their rest were gone,

And now no light was seen but one,
The light that led the stranger on;
That show'd above steel armour gleaming,
And many a dusky banner streaming,
From the black rafters of the roof,
In the night-wind, far aloof,
Like to some flitting phantom seeming;
And, stalking o'er the rushy floor,
It showed the knight where steps of gore
Had stain'd its green, with foot-prints red.
And the stag-hound, as the knight passed by,
Sent forth a mournful fearful cry.

XII.

The drowsy squire the stranger led;
(The wardour to his post was sped.)
They traversed the hall in silent march:
At the end was a door in a mitred arch.
The knight stood before that mitred door.
And gazed on a warrior shape above,
That seem'd to watch the passage o'er.
In his altered look strange passions strove!
The armoured shape leaned on its sword,
And downward bent its steely face,
As jealous who below might pace,
Or about to speak the challenge-word;

And it seemed the very form of one,
The knight perforce must look upon.

XIII.

Thus, while he stood in wonder-trance,
  The squire upheld the torch on high,
  Viewing the guest with watchful eye;
And marvelling what strange mischance
So check'd his step, and fix'd his glance:—
" Sir knight, why gaze you on that steel?
  It is a baron's good and bold;
  Had he been here, no welcome cold
Would he have shown a stranger-knight,
Who trusted to his towers at night."

XIV.

The spell of fant'sie loos'd awhile,
The knight return'd a grateful smile,
With thanks for this so courteous style;
And, then with thoughtful accent said,
  While yet he stood, that shape before,
" The armour some resemblance had
  To that of a dear friend no more!
A friend!"—he paus'd,—" a friend long dead!"
This, while he said, his colour fled.
The squire seem'd not to note his pain,
But, with fair speech, began again

Excuse to make for slender fare,
That it was night, and, not aware
Of honour'd guest approaching there,
The menials to their rest had gone;
A chamber should be fitted soon.
His squire and page should welcom'd be;
Right well he longed that squire to see.

XV.

The wearied knight a gesture made,
And looked his thanks, but nothing said;
Save that, for rest alone he prayed.
He sighed, as through that guarded arch,
And vaulted gloom, he held his march;
And there, before his doubting sight,
Glided again a pale sad light,
Full often he had seen with fear,
Yet more he felt to meet it here.
Then came they to an iron door,
And the knight beheld that flame no more.
It opened to a second hall,
Where warriors frowned upon the wall;
And ladies smiled in portraiture,
With downcast eye and look demure.
An umbered flash the red torch threw,
Athwart each warrior's steadfast brow;

And hardly might the gleam declare
A baron grim from lady fair.

XVI.

There is no need that I should tell,
What hasty fare the stranger took;
Nor how the squire, with silent look,
Watched, wondering, what had him befell;
So strangely gleamed his hollow eyes,
From forth the lifted beaver's shade;
So wan his lips, like one that dies,
So few the words and thanks he paid!

XVII.

Though round the hall his looks would steal,
Not well did torch or lamp reveal
The portraiture of warriors grim,
Or noble dames hung there so dim;
Their frowns and smiles were lost to him.
But once, when that he turned his head
Where the fix'd torch a gleaming shed,
A sable form, ill seen at most,
Went gliding up a stair, on high,
Passed through an open gallery,
And through a door-way there was lost,
That seemed to lead to antient rooms,
Such as where silence dwells, and glooms.

The knight, he felt a sudden chill,
  Though nought he said of what had sped;
  But the spicy draught he deeply quaff'd,
Whenever the page his cup did fill.
And from his spirits chaced the ill.

XVIII.

The night-cheer o'er, the page led on
  The stranger to his resting-place.
He led the way, that form had gone:
  On the high stair he stood a space,
  Waiting the knight's reluctant pace,
Then, with mute reverence, marshalled him
Through many a gallery, long and dim,
Where helmets watched, in order grim;
Through many a chamber, wide and lorn,
Where wint'ry damps had half withdrawn
The storied paintings on the wall.
Electra, o'er her brother's urn,
There bent the head, and seemed to mourn;
There, too, as meet in room and hall,
Troy's tale* and Hector's piteous fall:
Here Priam's Court, in purple and pall,

* The "Tale of Troy" appears to have been a very favourite subject in ancient tapestry. It occurs often in old castles, and is mentioned twice in this "Trew Chronique," as adorning the walls of stately chambers.

Its golden splendour now had lost;
  But Helen, on the rampart stood,
And pointed to the Grecian host,
  Out-stretching to the briny flood.
Here Hector's wife sat in her bower,
Waiting her lord's returning hour;
And 'broidering 'midst her maiden train,
While her infant played with silken skein.
There—but it boots not that I say,
What stories once, in long array,
Lived on those walls, now ghastly clay.

XIX.

The knight would oft, as he strode by,
Cast on their shade a searching eye;
And pause, as list'ning some drear sound,
That rose within the glimmering bound:
And start, as though some fearful sight
Passed along this gloom of night;
But, at a lesser winding stair,
(The long drawn chambers ended there,)
When to that narrow stair he drew,
He thought a robe of mourning hue
Went fleeting up that winding way;
No glimpse had he of shape or ray;
No foot he heard the stair ascend.

Yet still that seeming garment passed,
As though some fiend, with evil haste,
Did up that lonely tower wend.

XX.

The knight, he stood on the step below—
"Whither, my young page, dost thou go?
Who dwells within this lonely tower,
Passing with speed, in sable weed—
Passing with speed, at this dead hour?"
"Nobody, save the raven-crow,
Dwells within this lonely tower;
And here, Sir knight, is your resting-bower!"
"But in this tower I may not rest,
Till I know who that stair has pressed;
Did you not see that black weed wave?"
"Yes, knight, I saw the raven's wing,
Glint up that wall with sudden spring:
And hark! you now may hear him crave!"

XXI.

"It is not courteous, that my bower
Should be within this ruin'd tower!"
"But see, knight, 'tis not in decay;
The storm hath blown a bar away,
And the raven through the loop doth stray;
His nest is wet on the battlement grey:

Your chamber is a stately room,
Hung round with work of choicest loom;
And erst it was the resting-place
Of our dear Lady Baroness,
Before she went to stranger-land.
My lord yet strays on foreign strand.
The chamber has another stair,
Leading to many chambers fair;
But no step goes by night so far,
Since my lord baron went to war."

XXII.

The page stept on with torch before,
Far as that stately chamber's door.
"Page! lift that light—fain would I know,
Whither that second flight doth go?"
"It goes to a battlement up on high,
And to a turret perching by."
"Doth none keep watch on that turret high?"
"None, but the raven with his cry!
Your rest, Sir knight, he will not break;
To traitors only doth he speak.
They say he scents the new spilt blood."
Upon the stair the raven stood!
He turn'd his dark eye on the knight,
And, screaming, upward winged his flight.
The wondering page looked back with fright,

And met the stranger's fiery glance;
Then, hardly daring to advance,
Lingered he at that chamber-door;
"On," said the knight, "with torch before!"
Scarce was the page the threshhold o'er,
When check he made, and pale he turn'd;
Dim and more dim the torch-flame burn'd.
The knight look'd on, but nothing saw,
That might explain this sudden awe.

XXIII.

A spacious chamber there was spread,
And, for his rest, a stately bed;
Fresh rushes on the floor were strewn;
Faint on the arras'd walls were shown
The heroes of some antient story,
Now faded, like their mortal glory.
Another form, as dark as doom,
Stood within that chamber's gloom,
  Unseen by those who entered there.
His cause of dread the page thus said:
  "Methought I saw, within that chair,
The baron's self, my very lord;
I saw it, on a true man's word:
I saw my lord return'd from far,
Arrayed, as he went forth to war!

He fixed his very eyes on me,
  But looked not, as he wont to look.
Yet now no living shape I see,
And know that here he could not be;
  For, long since, he these walls forsook:
Yet is it strange such visions pale,
Should o'er my waking sight prevail."

XXIV.

"Whose are these antient walls, I pray?"
The sullen stranger 'gan to say:
"Sir, know you not these towers and halls
Watch where the foaming Conway falls:
Who should these walls and towers own?
And the wide woods and forest round,
Even to Snowdon's utmost bound,
Save the brave lord of Eglamore?"
The knight explained his ignorance,
He was a wanderer late from France.
The page surveyed him o'er again;
He thought the wily knight did feign:
A deadly hue was on his cheek;
His looks spoke more than words may speak.
Yet to the page, though much it told,
He read not all it might unfold.

XXV.

The knight perceived his doubting thought,
And drew a badge forth from his breast;
Some noble Order's golden crest,
Upon a field of silver wrought.
"This badge," he said, "with blood was bought."
He turn'd with haughty frown away.
The page did not more doubt betray;
But service offered to undo
His casque and linked harness true;
But the stranger gravely said him Nay,
And refused that night to disarray.

XXVI.

Wondering, yet fearing to demand,
Why to these towers from distant land,
The knight had come, without his train,
Pondered the youth his doubts again;
Again, as though his thoughts he read,
The knight look'd sternly down and said,
"My squire and my foot-page I missed
At night-fall, when the woods betwixt.
But they perchance may shelter find,
From this bitter-blowing wind,
In the deep hollow of some hill,
Till the dawn break, and the storm be still."

XXVII.

" But the wolf bays in the blast afar;
Sir knight, how may they scape such war?
I hear him now—he nearer howls!
Mercy! mercy! save their souls!"
" Hark!" said the knight, and stood aghast,
It was no wolf-howl in the blast;
It was a blood-hound's dreadful bay,
The stranger heard, with such dismay—
The blood-hound at the tower below;
That over pathless hill and dale,
Had tracked a murderer in the gale,
And came to claim his master's foe.
While listening to the lengthen'd yell,
The stranger seemed to hear his knell.
" A blood-hound loose, and at this hour!
Your rest, sir knight, had ill been kept;
Nor one within these gates had slept,
Had I been in my distant tower."
The page he lighted a lamp on high;
The stranger stifled scarce a sigh,
That heavily for utterance pressed.
He heard the page's steps descend,
And go where the long chambers bend,
Down to the halls, and th' outer walls.

The page knew not the chance he ran;
He was marked with the blood of a murder'd man!

XXVIII.

The knight, he listened in silent dread,
  Till now, the blood-hound's voice was stilled;
But soon a low voice near him sped,
  That every nerve with horror thrilled.
He looked the way that lone voice came,
And saw, by the lamp's tall spiring flame,
A portraiture on the wall beneath,
Of noble dame, that seemed to breathe.
Robed in sable weeds was she:
  The gleam fell on that lady's brow;
There, written dimly, you might see,
  The characters of hopeless woe.

XXIX.

Soon as that lady's face he saw,
  All other dread his heart forsook;
He gazed with fixt and frenzied awe,
  And vainly tried away to look:
For to his fearful sight it seemed,
  As though her eyes on his were bent;
And, where the pale flame wavering gleamed,
  As if her varying cheek were blent

With lights and shades of death;
While round her lips a grim smile drew,
And the rose paled that on them blew;
And, with faint lingering breath,
"Prepare," she said, "thy hour is nigh!
Unpitying, thou hast seen me die;
Unpitied be thy mortal sigh!"

XXX.

He heard the words—the words alone;
He heard not that deep solemn groan;
He heard not the clang of the 'larum bell,
Nor from the gates that horn-blast swell;
Nor heard the many-trampling hoofs,
Nor voices calling in the gale,
And ringing round the castle roofs,
Till they made the 'battled raven quail:
Nor heard the funeral shriek, that broke
Through every hall and lofty tower;
He heard alone the words she spoke.

XXXI.

Nor saw he in the court below,
By the torches' umbered glow,
Borne upon his bleeding bier,
With wounds unclosed and open eyes,
A warrior stretched in death draw near;
Nor heard the loud and louder cries,

This piteous sight of horror drew
From every friend and vassal true.
But he knew that voice at his chamber-door,
And straight the witch-veil of glamour
Falls, and his wonder-trance is o'er.
He hears his summons in that sound;
It is the bark of the true blood-hound.
True to his murdered lord is he;
He has traced the steps he could not see—
Traced them o'er darkened miles and miles,
O'er glen and mountain, wood and moor,
Through all their swift and winding wiles,
Till he stopped before his master's door,
And bayed the murderer in his bower.

XXXII.

The castle gates were strait unbarred,
And he sprang before his bleeding lord;
He passed the page unheeded by,
And tracked the stranger's steps on high;
Till at the door, that closed him in,
Loud and dread became his din.
The doors are burst, and the spectre-light
Betrayeth the form of the blood-tracked knight:
He was armed all over in coat of mail,
But nothing did steel that night avail;
He fell a torn corpse, beside that chair,
Whereunto the page did late appear,

By the dark glamour-art revealed,
His murdered lord with lance and shield.
The *murderer* fell, and his death-wound found
In the terrible fangs of the true blood-hound.

Here the voice of the minstrel ceased; and, after striking a few notes of his harp, full and deep, he rested with a look of sorrow. His eyes dwelt on the Lady Barbara—but she heeded him not; but sat with head inclined, as if still listening to his dismal tale. There followed a dread silence in the room, as of expectation of that which was to follow. Some there were, who said the ditty was already ended; yet they would fain have heard something of the pitiful history of that unhappy lady, whose portraiture was in the tower-chamber, and would have known what was the guilty motive of the knight against the Lord of Eglamore; and how it chanced he came so unwittingly to his

castle. Others there were then present, who, having noticed the young Gaston de Blondeville to be ill at ease, the while the minstrel sung, and being, perchance, already moved by the merchant's strange accusation, scrupled not to think the story touched him nearly; and that Pierre rested, not because his ditty was at an end, or from weariness; but that he doubted whether it would be well to proceed to the second part.

However this may be, he needed not have stayed his strain, for Sir Gaston was no longer in the chamber. Whether Pierre knew this or not, he began once more to strike upon the harp; when, on a sudden, the king's trumpets were heard blowing up near the stair; and anon, his Highness entered the bower, it being almost time that he should go to his rest for "all-night."

There was no more harping; Pierre

tuning not up his second fit; and belike, if his Highness had been there at first, he would have bidden him to shorten his ballad by one-half.

The King looked about for Sir Gaston; and, espying him not, asked wherefore he was not there; but, before any answer could be given, the knight had returned, and now approached his Highness. He was then commanded to dance a round with the Lady Barbara, and he obeyed; but many there noted the sadness on his brow, though his steps were light and gay.

A more pleasureful sight could not be than the Queen's bower, as it was at that time, where she sat in estate, under a cloth of gold, her ladies standing about her chair, and her maidens on either hand, below the steps of her throne; and two young damsels of surpassing beauty and richly bedight, sitting on the first step, at

her feet; the same, that were used so to sit, when her Highness kept state in the great hall at festivals.

Behind them, half encircling the throne, stood twenty household esquires, holding great wax torches, right richly beseen in the king's livery, and proud to wear it, gentils as they were, as I said before, and of ancient families in the countries from whence they came.

The arched roof was curiously wrought in that fashion, which King Henry had newly brought into favour; and, besides these lights, a great crystal lamp, that hung from the roof, shone over the chamber and upon the goodly assemblage, as they looked upon the Lady Barbara, passing so winningly in the dance. That night, the Earl of Richmond bore the Queen's spice-plate, and Sir Philip de Kinton her cup.

When the Lady Barbara had ended

her dance, the Queen called her to her chair; and, making her take of the sweetmeats from her own plate, spoke commendable words to her, as did his Highness King Henry. Then the Queen, turning to the Lady Gloucester, took from her hands a girdle, richly beset with jewels, and, clasping it on the Lady Barbara, kissed her, and bade her wear it ever, for her sake and for her honour. Her Highness then stretched out her hand, to Sir Gaston who, kneeling, put it to his lips. "May you, Sir knight," said her Highness, "as well deserve this lady, as she deserves this token of my regard!"

Then, the King said many gracious things, and seemed so merry of heart, that he made all around him gladsome; till, the Voide being ended, he went forth with the Queen, the trumpets blowing before them; and the chamber was then speedily avoided for all night.

While these things were passing in the chambers of estate, there were divers wassailings and merriments making in other places of the castle. In the great hall were feasting and revelling, but not of estate. There were tumblers and jugglers and morrice-dancers and mimicks and mummers, with pipings and blowings, that made the roofs ring.

The monks at the priory heard them afar, while at the last even-song; and long after; and well I wote, that had it not been the King's castle, there had been some rebuke, as indeed due, for such noise made. The Prior in his chamber sat alone; listening, I guess, in gloomy mood to the revelry; and, all that night, only Edmund the monk and mass Peter with him: he came not forth to midnight-song.

But now I must return, and so must ye that hear, or read, to the castle. In

the hall there was a dancer on stilts, playing the while on a recorder; there were dancers on one leg, and dancers upon the head; but that which most rejoiced many of the beholders, were the disguisings and the quaint antics of the mummers. There came a whole troop, some wearing the heads of asses, some of bulls, some of calves, some of cats, who brayed and kicked, bellowed and tossed, scratched and mewed, to the very life. Others, like stags and hares, hounds and apes, kept not so pertinently to their pretended natures, but marched on with solemn state, as much as might be, hand in hand, as if they had been loving friends and neighbours; yet each with a dagger stuck in his girdle. And others again, with fools' girdles and bells hanging to them; tossing their heads, and cutting such strange capers, to the noise of pipes and drums, as made the sides of many to

shake with laughter, and roused up every hawk on perch there to shake his bells in concert.

But all this was child's play, though it was often done before the worshipfullest estates, in comparison of the sayer's art; which, when he could be heard between whiles, when the loud revelry paused and held breath, was marvellous to hear: and, as soon as those mad-heads caught the words of that tale-teller, sooth to say, they soon were still and hushed, as though no living soul but he breathed there; listening to his dismal tradey, with tears in their eyes, or quaking for fear of the strange things he told them. He, the while, with solemn visage, showing as though he himself believed all the marvels he related, and not showing roguish smiles, as some do, kept on always to the far end of his long tale: though some learned clerks would oft-times comment

to their neighbours upon his marvels, as if he had purported lofty matter worth their notice, and did not merely strive to while an idle tide away.

In other parts of the castle were those gentils and honest gentlewomen, that, misliking the loud revelry of the hall, drew together in chambers apart; and delighted themselves with histories of times past, the sad hopes of lovers, or the deeds of brave knights, or otherwise in singing and harping, after their own manner.

In the lower hall too was feasting, and the mirth did not stop short of the "Kuchane," so that every man to the lowest degree was joyous; and each chamber and tower rung with song, or laughter, save the prison tower of the poor merchant. He, as he lay on his pallet-bed, heard those sounds of music and jollity, in confused uproar rising through the courts, while his heart was stricken with

fear and sadness; for, whether he were right or not in believing Sir Gaston to be the murderer of his friend, it is certain, that he had seen his friend murdered, and that too, as he had said, in the woods of Ardenn.

He was, at this time, far from his home and friends, and had been travelling, over these parts, a lonesome stranger, along the foss-way from Lincoln, southward; having been on his merchandize into the north seas, and having landed on the eastern coast. Coming again to that place, where, a few years back, he had buried his friend, the remembrance of him broke out in fresh grief; and, hearing that the king was coming to keep festival in Kenilworth, he resolved to break the matter to him; as well as to adventure to tell him, the times were such it was no longer safe to journey in any part of his kingdom.

The most audacious robberies, certes,

were then committed at noon-day with impunity; nay, the very thieves themselves feared not to be seen walking about, little attempt being made to seize them, or, in any wise, to suppress these scandalous outrages. Not only then did the sad fall of his friend, but also the fearful condition of the living, urge the merchant to make the truth known to the king.

With this design he had rested at Kenilworth, but not at the house where he had formerly suffered such affliction; and, on the king's arrival, had gone forth in the crowd to behold him, though he had not intended to present his petition in that time of turmoil. But, when he saw near his Highness, riding as it were in the top of favour, the very man, whom he thought to be the slayer of his kinsman; when he beheld that look, which he felt to dart into his heart, and to revive there all the horror he had felt at the

aspect of the murderer, at the moment when his friend had been stricken down—then it was, that, overcome by the strength of his feelings, he dropped down senseless in the castle court, as hath been related.

And now, what had he gained by his courageous demand of justice? Suspicion, contempt, fear, grief, a prison, and, perhaps, death. Yet did he not repent the effort he had made, so honest was his grief for the fate of his kinsman; so much was his mind possessed with the notion, that he had accused his very murderer; so confident was he that he was performing a duty; and, what is more, so sure was he, that to perform his duty in this world is the wisest, the most truly cunning thing a man can contrive to do. Whether his suspicions concerning the knight were just or not; these, his conclusions touching his own conduct, none

but fools, or villains, that is, none but fools—will deny.

Thus he lay on his pallet, alike deprived of sleep by the jollity of others and by his own grievous reflections. A lamp burned beside him, but it served only to show the forlornness of his condition, in this high and distant tower. Sometimes, he would rise and look through his grated window upon the inner court of the castle, listening there awhile to the distant minstrelsy and to the confusion of numberless voices, footsteps and closing doors, that rose from many a chamber below. Anon, a torch-bearer would pass the court, a page, perhaps, or a yeoman; and would show the gloomy towers above and the steps of the guest he led at their feet. But, this passed, nothing could the prisoner see, save here and there, a lamp burning through a casement of glass (and

a goodly show there was of such windows now in this castle) like stars through a clouded sky; but mostly the glorious beams of the great hall, that struck through the windows and lighted the air above. Once he heard the trumpets blow, and thought the King was coming forth, and once he fancied he saw, in the person of one who followed a torch-bearer, Sir Gaston himself. Then turned he from the casement, looked no more, and fell upon his pallet.

At last, every distant sound grew fainter; the noise of the dancers ceased; then the minstrelsy sunk low; the voices of the hall revellers became few; he heard less frequently the doors opened and shut; and then he heard the fastening of bolts and bars: and, afar off, the castle gates closed for the night; and soon all grew still, as though no living creature inhabited there.

And thus it kept, until the wayte piped his second watch in all the courts. Then the stranger arose, and, looking again through his grate, saw him well, by the light his groom carried, piping the hour. And, when the man had finished his save, he went round the court, his boy-groom holding up the torch, while he tried every door, and found that all was safe. By this light too, he perceived the wardour's men on guard; but no living being else was seen. The windows of the great hall were dark: and, the torch being gone nothing glimmered through the night, save one great star, which wizards say is evil. It stayed, at his hour, right over King Henry's lodgings; but for whom it watched, who was there that might tell? The prisoner knew the star, and all that was thought of it; and he betook him to his pallet groaning heavily.

He had not long been there when, as

he thought, a voice near him spoke his name. Now, there was a small grate looked out from his chamber upon the stair: and thence the voice seemed to come. The prisoner, raising himself from his pallet, turned, and saw there the figure of a man passing away. He kept his eyes fixed, for some space, upon the grate, but the figure appeared no more, and he sunk again on his pallet.

The voice, faint and passing as it was, had thrilled him with dread. Whose it was, wherefore it had called him by a name known but to few, and had then passed away, without communing with him, he tried in vain to understand; yet seemed it not wholly new to him.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET-STREET.